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JUNE 1993

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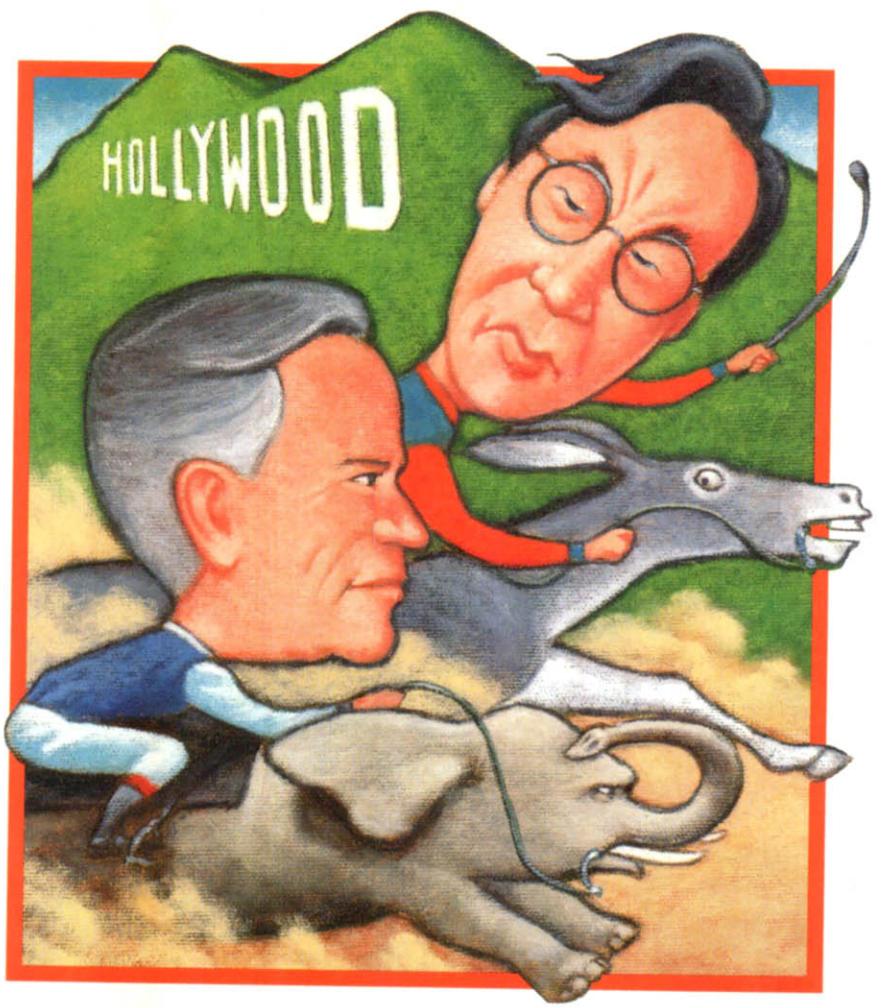

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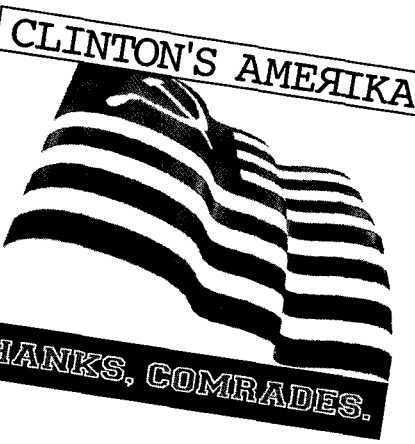

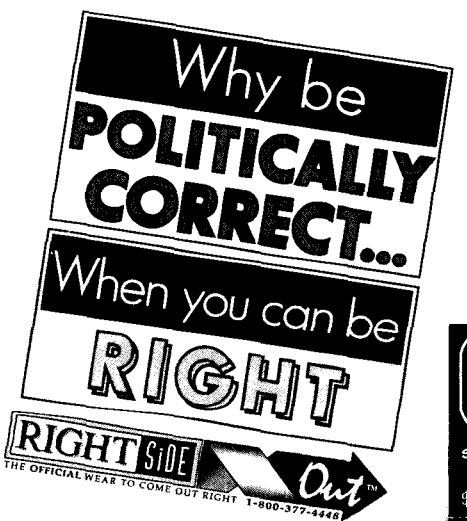

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You deserve a factual look at...

Myths about Israel and the Middle East (2)

Should we re-examine endlessly repeated platitudes?

In a previous installment in this series of clarifying messages about Israel and the Middle East, we examined certain myths which, by dint of constant repetition, had acquired currency and acceptance. We looked at the myth of "Palestinian nationhood", the myth of the Gaza Strip and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") being "occupied territory", the myth that Jewish settlements in these territories are "the greatest obstacle to peace", and the myth that Israel is unwilling to "yield land for peace". And we cleared up the greatest myth of all, namely that Israel's administration of the territories and not Arab determination to destroy the state, is the root cause of the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. But these are not all the myths; there are more.

What are some of these myths?

Myth: The Arabs of Israel are a persecuted minority without civil and political rights.
Reality: The 700,000 non-Jews (mostly Arabs) who are citizens of Israel have the same civil rights that Jews have. They vote, are members of the Knesset (parliament), and are part of Israel's civil and diplomatic services. Arabs have full access to the Israeli legal, health and educational systems, including Arabic and Moslem universities. The only difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews is that the Jews must serve three years in the military and at least one month a year until age 50. The Arabs have no such obligation. For them, military service is voluntary, but very few avail themselves of the privilege.
Myth: Israel should give up Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") because strategic depth is meaningless in this age of missiles.
Reality: Israel is a mini-state—about half the size of San Bernardino county in California. If another, even smaller mini-state were carved out of it, Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the opinion of 100 retired U.S. generals and admirals as conveyed to the President of the U.S. If the Arabs were to occupy whatever little strategic depths Israel has between the Jordan River and its populated coast, they would not need any missiles. Artillery and mortars would suffice, since Israel would be only nine miles wide at its waist. Those who urge such a course either do not understand the situation or have a death wish for Israel.
Myth: If Israel would allow a Palestinian state to arise in Judea/Samaria and in the Gaza Strip it would be a democratic state and would be totally demilitarized.
Reality: There is no prospect at all that anything resembling a democratic state could be created. There is not a single democratic Arab state—all of them are tyrannies of varying degrees. Even today, under Israeli administration, the PLO, the Islamic fundamentalists, and other factions fight for supremacy and ruthlessly murder each other. A country torn apart by civil strife like Lebanon is likely to be a much better prospect. As for demilitarization, it is totally unlikely that—with Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, all of which are in a declared state of war with Israel at its borders—a power vacuum would be possible. Despite pious promises, the arms merchants of the world would find a great new market; and the neighboring hostile Arab countries would be happy to supply anything else that might be needed.
Myth: Israel should make "confidence building" gestures for the sake of peace.
Reality: What really is it that the world expects Israel to do for the sake of peace? Twenty-one of the twenty-two Arab countries consider themselves in a state of war with Israel and don't even recognize its "existence". That has been going on for forty-five years. Wouldn't it be about time that the Arabs made some kind of a "gesture"? Could they not for instance terminate the state of war? Could they not finally abolish the economic boycott against Israel that has been in place for over forty years—long before Israel came into the administration of the "West Bank"? Could they not stop the yearly charade of attempting the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations? Any single one of these would be such a "gesture", but none is forthcoming.

Now that the parties to the conflict in the Middle East are engaged, for over a year, in an on-again/off-again peace conference, the old clichés are being trotted out again and the old myths resurrected in order to pressure Israel to make "concessions". Israel is America's staunchest ally and certainly its only true ally in that area of the world. It is in our national interest that stark reality, not myths, govern any peace negotiations.

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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

Volume 26 Number 6, June 1993

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ABOUT THIS MONTH

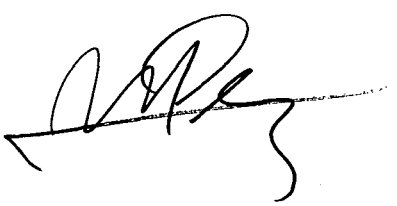
by

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

"YOU MAY ALL GET A SUNTAN before this ends." No, this wasn't Bill Clinton sending a final warning to David Koresh & Co. in Waco, Texas. It was Clinton joshing with reporters before an April 20 Rose Garden press conference on the day after his administration's botched effort to save the Koresh children. His sunny mood bespoke an unwillingness to face the dire consequences of the Waco showdown. After initially condemning Koresh, he and his loose lips were soon blaming the victims—including the children. No way Attorney General Janet Reno should resign just "because some religious fanatics murdered themselves," Clinton said. He later added, "My immediate concern was whether the children had gotten out and whether they were escaping, or whether they were inside trying to burn themselves up." The good news for the nation, *Time* magazine reported, was that Reno had approved the use of tear gas "only after being assured that the form the FBI was using was not permanently harmful, carcinogenic or a possible cause of birth defects." As one of Ben Stein's braino travel companions might have put it in this month's installment (see "Studious City," page 40), there's a black hole at the heart of this presidency.

IN SHORT AND IN SUM, this is not exactly an administration one should eagerly do business with, as even the Senate Republicans have figured out. How then to explain the leaders of the formerly Reaganite U.S. Chamber of Commerce, who have allowed themselves to be sucked in? Daniel Wattenberg exposes their machinations in this month's lead feature (see "Archey's Bunker," page 18), and offers plenty of evidence that such opportunism is coming to naught. Readers of Christopher Caldwell's report from Los Angeles (see "Universal City," page 29) will similarly be struck by likely mayoral winner Richard Riordan's oh-so-cautious conservatism. Clinton all along has been banking on significant business support—but at what price for American business?

ON HER WAY TO THIS YEAR'S Kentucky Derby, the wily First Ma, Virginia Kelley, told *Sports Illustrated* that she picks her horses after looking "at their conformation when they come out on the track." If her son were a horse and she had a hundred days to observe his "conformation," would she still bet on him?



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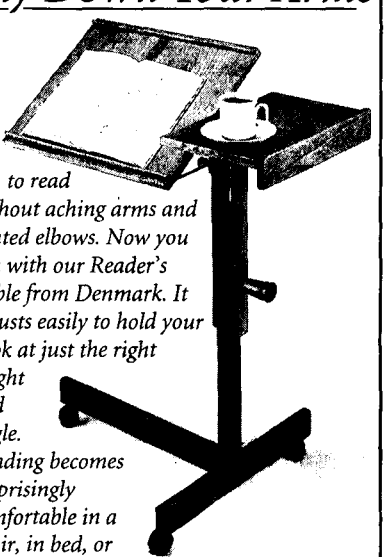

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How to Be Religious Without Losing Your Mind

Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational, that the price of salvation is checking your mind at the Pearly Gates. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, rationalism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

Contrary to stereotypes, this religious renaissance does not imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, and human dignity; nor does it signify a hostility to science, only an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

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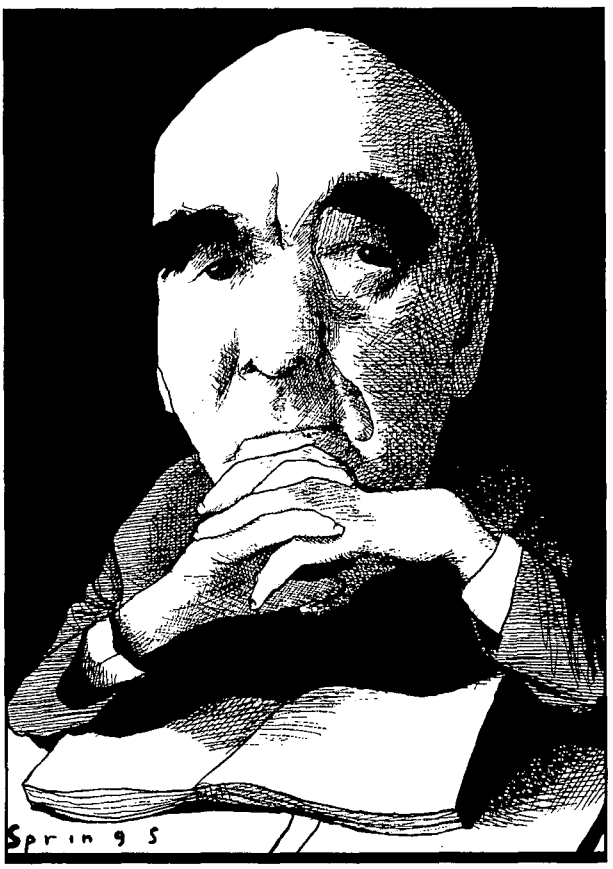

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The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the leading free-market lobby of the Reagan years, has been taken over by influence-peddling Clintonites—and Republicans and businessmen have lost no time in fighting back.

America's Oldest (and Newest) Christians, by Edward Norden 24
As Egypt crumbles under fundamentalist pressure, where else can the Copts go?

Universal City, by Christopher Caldwell 29
From a cast of twenty-four mayoral aspirants, Los Angeles chose Richard Riordan and Michael Woo, two mellow guys with clashing visions for the capital of the post–melting pot world.

Cover illustration by David Turner. Interior art by John Springs and Jake Tapper.

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• April was a truly cruel month for our boyish president. When the month began his political acumen was marveled upon by all the wizards and oracles of the Washington press corps. He was invincible! A prodigy! A workaholic! Suave! Old Washington was swinging again with the gaggle of young political Mozarts and Beethovens whom he had brought from the Ivy League to the Potomac. And old Washington was working, too. Government was to be "reinvented." *The geniuses never slept!* The tax code had come under their enlightened gaze, and the budget, and health care and infrastructure and the military and . . . well, late in April one of these Einsteins began an official White House media advisory thus: "His Excellency Lech Walesa, President of the Czech Republic . . ."

• This charming piece of idiocy appeared in press kits about the time that President Clinton's misnamed economic stimulus package slammed into a Republican filibuster. Soon all Washington was bawling about Boy Clinton's ineptitude. Weeks before, the *Washington Post* had enthused over how he was "dazzling" this great city with his legislative mastery. Now the entire press corps was in a charnel humor, and Democrats were in rebellion. Budget Director Leon Panetta on April 26 blubbered that the president's entire agenda was in trouble: his investment tax credit scam, his $113.6 billion infrastructure pork, his tax raid on the private sector, perhaps even the North American Free Trade Agreement. Jimmy Carter lives!

• The senseless—and baffling—campaign against followers of the Hindu religion living in America continues, though only this department of *The American Spectator* has shown any concern whatsoever. In Chino, California, six cows were electrocuted when a power pole at the R & J Albers Dairy was mysteriously toppled into the drinking trough of the bovine clerics. The atrocity could have been much worse, for more than a hundred of the sacred hoofers were proceeding to the trough for their daily ablution of the muzzle and a swig when their ill-starred colleagues of a sudden lit up and began to sizzle, causing them reason to pause and stampede.

• In Texas, a veritable fever swamp of anti-Hindu sentiment, more than a hundred longhorns perished, many under bizarre circumstances. And it seems that the anti-Hindu movement is receiving support even from American elites. Miss Jane Fonda and her present husband, Mr. Ted Turner, after laying down a barrage of anti-cow oratory, are threatening to release more than a thousand godless

buffaloes from that mysterious ranch they maintain in New Mexico. On April 18, the celebrated couple announced that the buffaloes will be released on public grazing lands hitherto reserved for cows and cacti despite cattlemen's protests. Some cattlemen are attempting to play down the buffalo threat with gentle wit, for instance Mr. Al Schneberger, executive director of the New Mexico Cattlegrowers Association, who joshes: "I put this [buffalo ranching] a little bit higher than a worm farm." Yet darker powers may be at work, and even the FBI may be playing a role in the anti-Hindu intrigues. On April 18, its agents stormed the temple of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, leading to the indiscriminate deaths of Davidians and livestock alike. Finally there is evidence that the campaign is escalating. Until recently only cows have been victimized, but late in April investigators in Ardsley, New York, discovered the decomposing heads of three horses lying in plastic bags by a roadside. Foul play is suspected. Yet at President Clinton's April 23 press conference not one question was raised regarding the plight of American Hindus. (Assisting in research on this story were Mr. Bill Moyers, Mr. Gary Sick, and, of course, Mr. Gore Vidal.)

• In India's northern state of Haryana, Mr. Balwant Singh, a police commando, was jailed for having violated a donkey. The Rev. Jesse Jackson withdrew from the race for NAACP Executive Director, citing his intention to avoid a "fratricidal political battle," though it is always possible that he wishes to allow himself more time for solitary prayer and quiet readings of the Scriptures. Prayer has always been at the center of his life; do not be fooled by the swank haberdashery, the distended limousines, and the noxious cologne. Governor Mario Cuomo withdrew his name from consideration for the recently opened Supreme Court vacancy. He intends to devote his full time to the economic revival of New York, and perhaps there will be a place on his economic team for Dr. Jack Kevorkian. North Carolina became NCAA basketball champion, and a New York judge has ruled that once Mr. Thomas Steel handed over his sperm to a lesbian couple for the purpose of artificial insemination he had no legal rights to it or to any other bodily effluvia that he might have granted them.

• Insensitive law enforcement officials at Penn State University may have a homegrown Anita Hill on their hands. Late in April, an unidentified female student complained to them that after she paid a male student to take an examination he flunked the exam and refused to return

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her payment, a $1,200 stereo. As of now, both students are under investigation, but do not be surprised if the National Organization for Women hails the female student for "coming forward" and sets up a scholarship in her name. At the University of Virginia, faculty members have voluntarily agreed to refrain from sexual congress with students whom they either teach or supervise so long as they can have their way with other students. Advocates of liberalized immigration policy suffered an unanticipated reversal in Miami, Florida, where United States District Judge James Kehoe fined Mr. Matthew Block, 31, $30,000 for bringing an orangutan into the country, supposedly in violation of the United States Endangered Species Act. In Fort Worth, Texas, Mr. Jose Angel Diaz, 27, was sentenced to sixty-two years in the hoosegow for murdering his two-year-old son. Mr. Diaz's son had offended his father by playing with dolls.

• In Los Angeles, California, Mr. Richard Schmiechen died. Mr. Schmiechen is the film producer who won an Academy Award for *The Times of Harvey Milk*, a gruesome documentary about the homosexual life of Mr. Harvey Milk and his brutal death at the hands of a demented political opponent. His lachrymose films all dealt with death, disease, madness—in fine and in sum: all the misogelastic topics which win the faintly talented of this second-rate age Emmys, Peabodys, and that politically contrived Oscar. The passage of Mr. Schmiechen is of course unfortunate, but it is still more unfortunate that the Republic contains not one authoritative institution capable of maintaining intellectual standards and preserving useful and comprehensible words such as "gay" from the idiotic politicizers whose sole purposes is to importune on the commonweal, always at a profit.

• In crime news, the "Shrimp Lady" was nabbed. According to the esteemed *New York Post*, she is Miss Sheri Kay, 42, an exconsumerist who made hundreds of thousands in illegal profits by picking up large quantities of shrimp in grocery stores, taking them to the manager, and claiming that they were an earlier purchase which she had found to be spoiled. From a base in Reno, Nevada, Miss Kay had traveled the country working the scheme so successfully that when the police arrested her in Glenville, New York, they found $400,000 in her car. In Boston, Massachusetts, an eight-year-old girl was arrested for the attempted armed robbery of Mr. Lane Spero. On April 25, hundreds of thousands of poofters marched on Washington demanding various rights and rituals for their multifaceted community of problem children. And a squirrel drowned in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, after falling into the toilet of the elegant Mrs. Kim Richardson. As she testified to her local gazette in a news story that is bound to land her a spot on "Geraldo" or "Sixty Minutes," "I went to the bathroom and lifted the lid and sat down. That's when I felt something scratching my behind. I almost died! I slammed the toilet down and called my husband at work and told him that he had to come home." He did. And to end the crisis we are relieved to report Mrs. Richardson's assurance that "I decided to use the guest bathroom."

—RET

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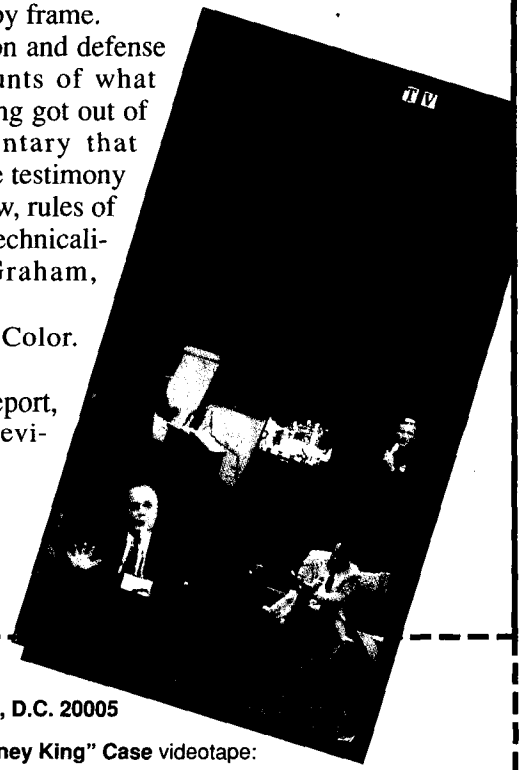

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Peewee Marquette

Victor Gold erroneously refers to "Shorty, Birdland's midget m.c." ("Cool Diz and Me," TAS, March 1993). The Jazz Corner of the World's dyspeptic host, Peewee Marquette, upon hearing this misnomer, would no doubt have jabbed Mr. Gold in the posterior with his lit cigar, which he used as a weapon against the world, filled with people he was forever doomed to look up at.

A fixture at Birdland until its demolition, Mr. Marquette was renowned for his malapropish introductions ("And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, Birdland proudly presents: the great Count Basie, with Joe Williams and His Orchestra!"), his triumphant weather reports ("I know y'all are glad to be at Birdland tonight, because outside it's freezin' cold, but down here it's warm . . . and it's cool!"), and his egalitarian ringside table celebrity intros ("We're real proud to have here tonight one of the world's mos' popular great ladies, Eleanor Roosevelt! Stand up and take a bow, honey!"). He also tap-danced on rare occasions, and when egged on enough by Dizzy, Basie, or Ella Fitzgerald, could be prevailed upon to offer a nifty rendition of "South of the Border." *—Tom Garlock*

Knoxville, Tennessee

Victor Gold replies:

You're right. I'm wrong. My apology to Peewee, wherever he may be. But after forty-plus years my memory seems to have come up short.

The Word on Slobo

Special congratulations to Jeffrey Gedmin for his profile of Slobodan Milosevic, Serbian dictator and architect of genocide in Bosnia ("Comrade Slobo," *TAS*, April 1993). In the sea of ink that has been dedicated to the war, Gedmin is among the very few to recognize that this war, in the end, has much less to do with past grievances, particularly the oft-cited sufferings of Serbs in World War II, than with the desire of Milosevic and his gang to remain on top. Gedmin seems to be the first to have enunciated the obvious fact, "Milosevic wants war . . . because he needs war to stay in power."

I'm also amused to see the magazine utilizing the classic antiwar cartoons of Robert Minor (same issue, page 31). Minor's career is fascinating. Texas born, he became nationally famous as a daily newspaper cartoonist, then yet more famous for his radical journalism and his pacifist works during World War I. The last cost him his position in what today we would call the mainstream media. He was a founder of the American Communist Party, and became one of its leading and most tragic figures, abandoning his art for a career as a Stalinist functionary. He died in obscurity.

In publishing Gedmin's article and reproducing Minor's work, *TAS* has demonstrated, ironically enough, that the authentic successors of the fine old tradition of American moral protest are to be found today very far from the leftist milieu. *—Stephen Schwartz*

San Francisco Chronicle

San Francisco, California

Taking to Terrill

I was on the verge of dismissing William McGurn's review of Ross Terrill's *China in Our Time* as another lengthy exercise in dry book-review journalism that I could live without—until something caught my eye, and forced me to read the entire piece (*TAS*, April 1993). Fascinated by the irony throughout, I came away regretting the scarcity of other similar "conversions" of seventies left-liberals to sanity in these days of American socialistic experimentation.

Will some future historian, in chronicling the "Clinton Era," echo the Peking professor's tragic observation—"All the old ethics were destroyed, but nothing new has come"? How long will the siege continue? *—William E. Laughlin*

Wichita, Kansas

L.A. Numbers

Edward Norden's interesting and perceptive article on Fairfax High School in Los Angeles ("International Studies in Los Angeles," *TAS*, March 1993) neglects to mention one significant fact: at 71-percent combined minority student enrollment, Fairfax is actually in the bottom third of L.A. high schools in ethnicity—that is, two-thirds of L.A. Unified School District high schools have ethnicity figures greater than 71 percent. This is unsurprising, given that minority high school student enrollment in the district as a whole is 86 percent.

Clearly, as Norden so well points out, the demographic transformation that California in particular is experiencing is enormous. *—Alan O. Ebenstein*

Santa Barbara, California

Honeymoon in Boulder

Ben Stein's definition of Baby Boomers (a miscreant nobility which I have the great misfortune of being a member of), contained in his April 1993 Diary "Two Steps Forward," is the best I've seen to date. It is articulate and succinct, and will no doubt find its way into a dictionary one day. . . .

If you wish to predict the effect the Clinton administration will have on this country, have a look at the reign of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in Canada—a once-great nation that he almost single-handedly ruined (and from where I have escaped, only to find a man of the same ilk inhabiting the White House). Intellectual aptitude; egotism; avoidance of military service; contempt for conventional morality; advocacy of multiculturalism and an activist, interventionist government; abiding interest in socialism; and a loony wife are but a small number of the meritorious qualities these two gentlemen have in common. God help the USA.

—Avrom E. Howard

Boulder, Colorado

Snake Oil

One of the best things about *TAS* is the movie section. It's always a pleasure to read a review by someone to the right of Trotsky, but there *is* a danger that the reviewer may have weird ideas of his own. James Bowman's peculiar thesis in the March issue—that movies such as *Alive* and *Lorenzo's Oil* don't rope us in because of the unlikelihood we'd ever find ourselves in the same situations—applies to just about every movie I can think of. Yet that supposed distance doesn't seem to stop people from enjoying everything from *Star Wars* to *Driving Miss Daisy*, all of which deal with unlikely or impossible

(continued on page 71)

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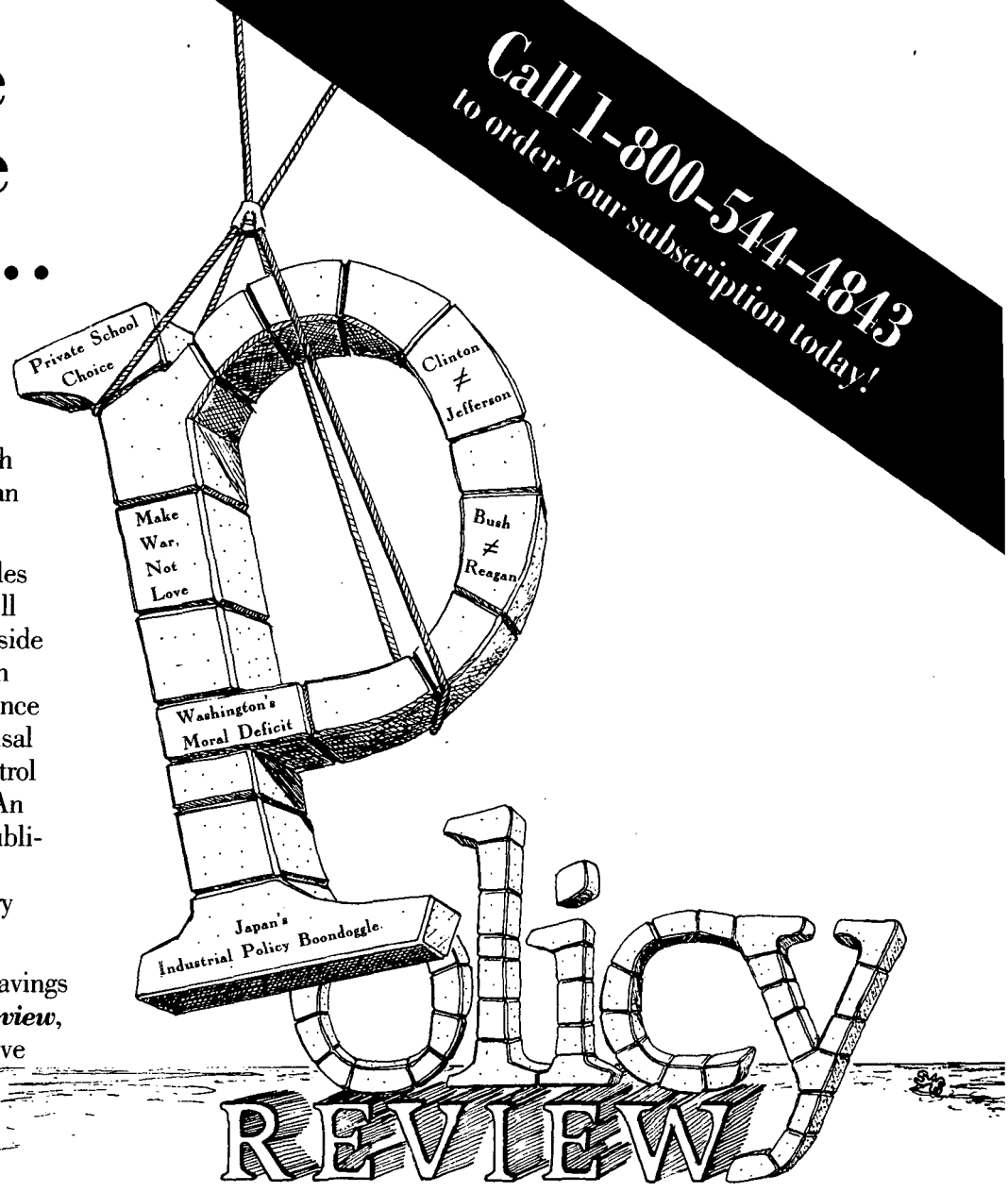

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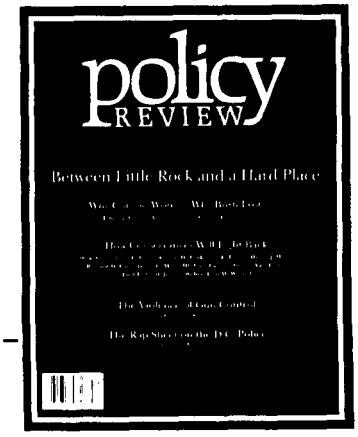

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Public Radio's Anti-Semites

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

As we contemplate the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising against the Nazis, and the 400,000 Polish Jews who over a two-and-a-half-year period were shipped from Warsaw to hideous deaths in the Treblinka concentration camp, let us pause to note that our government funds anti-Semitism right here in America. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting gamely subsidizes such orifices of hate as KPFK-FM in Los Angeles. According to the Corporation's chairman Sheila Tate, there is nothing that can be done about it. The First Amendment protects hate. Yes, but does the First Amendment call for government funding of hate? I think not.

As Los Angeles simmers with racial tension, the programmers at KPFK have been doing their bit for tolerance and harmony by broadcasting tapes of distinguished bigots claiming that the genetic makeup of whites makes them incurably psychopathic and in need of incarceration, psychosurgery, or—in extreme conditions!—death. The thesis that Jewish doctors have been injecting black infants with AIDS has been aired by a Mr. Steve Cokely, as have Dr. Leonard Jeffries's irregular hypotheses, for instance, that Jews, not Arabs, ran the African slave trade. Other speakers have defamed Asians, Hispanics, and homosexuals. Most of this stuff has been aired on a show called "Afrikan Mental Liberation Weekend," whose producer/host Dr. Kwaku Person-Lynn indulges callers lauding Adolf Hitler and abominating American democracy.

Now, of course, Dr. Person-Lynn is most likely just another of the hundreds—perhaps thousands—of charlatans who regularly prey on the ignorance of the poor illiterates of our inner cities. And the charlatans' dupes are not defined solely by the color of their skin. Doubtless there are multitudes of whites and Asians who tune in to KPFK daily to ruminate upon the arcane knowledge of the various "doctors" and "professors" howling there. There was a day when such dopefetchers simply worked the neighborhoods on foot or from a soapbox in the park. But now with the spread of "higher education" and the appalling lowering of university standards many of these charlatans have advanced degrees. Some teach at heretofore respectable universities Dr. Jeffries menaces intellect at City College of New York. And all bring to their spiels a patina of science and learning.

The important point is that our government is subsidizing these dispensers of hate and stupidity. Only one member of the Board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Victor Gold, the writer, is alive to the problem. He draws a distinction between "censorship," which expurgates or changes programming and obviously runs afoul of the First Amendment; and "sponsorship" of programming, which is beyond the purview of the First Amendment. He has submitted a proposal to the Board that reaffirms broadcasters' right to free expression but denies them federal funding for "repeated programming" that "defames any race, religion or minority." The Board has rejected that proposal, though Gold continues to champion it.

Nat Hentoff, one of the Republic's most tireless defenders of free expression and of tolerance, would approach KPFK's hate programming differently. He believes that it is the duty of intelligent minds to criticize stupidity and hate. He urges that local broadcasters and commen-

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times *column syndicated by Creators Syndicate.*

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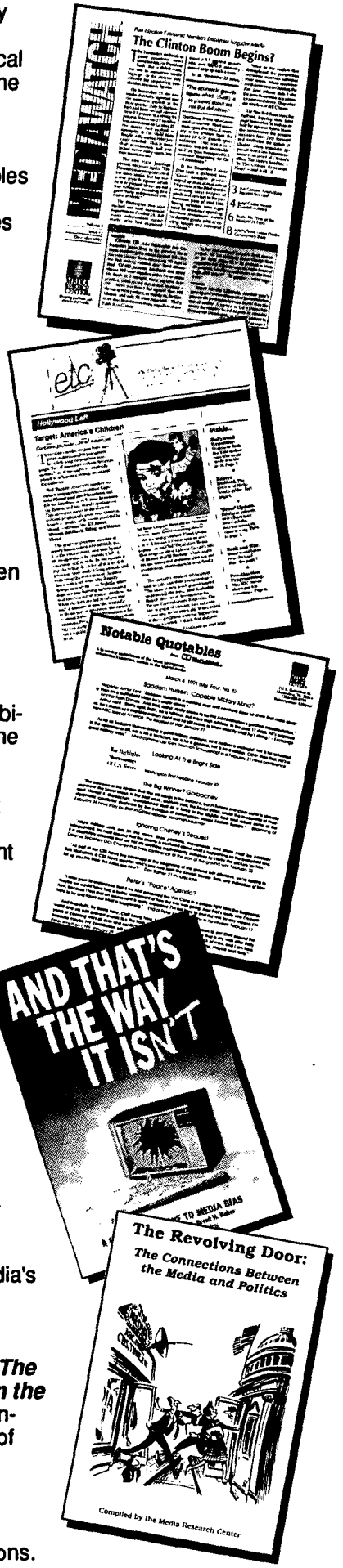

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tators deride such claptrap as Afrikan Mental Awareness Week, rebroadcast tapes of these malign outbursts, and point out their errors.

Hentoff opposes any attempt by government to affect program content. I share his libertarian instinct. Let us make of the Dr. Kwakus of this world not martyrs but the butts of ridicule.

Yet here we have a problem. Most broadcasters and commentators do not have the boldness of mind and the liveliness of conscience that stimulate Nat Hentoff. Genuine liberalism is pretty much dead in the Republic. Thirty years ago in Los Angeles a chorus would have sounded against hate on the radio. Today that city's commentators go on about their comfortable business of sharing platitudes. They do not recognize hate language when it issues from those who hitherto were the victims of hate. And so, while we wait for them to catch on, let us take up Gold's solution. After all, he is right. The First Amendment is against censorship. Government sponsorship is quite another thing. ❐

La Bohème

Prague

This is my third trip to Prague since the 1989 evaporation of Communism. In fact, it is my second consecutive Prague Spring. Slowly, but perceptibly, things are improving materially. In terms of freedom, life is better than it has been since March 15, 1939, when Hitler marched in and, to the astonishment of Britain and France's appeasers, murdered 250,000 Czechs—over half of them Jews.

There remain Communists, some in government, about 12 percent in parliament; but most are decidedly elderly and bereft of the old fire to bludgeon and to oppress. Mostly these dinosaurs go about their septembral business of intoning Marxism to ghosts; and—assuming they have any international standing whatsoever as either intellectuals or technical experts—they occasionally turn up at an American university. The other day Professor Vojtech Cepl of Prague's Charles University, who has just put the finishing touches on the Czech Republic's new constitution, lamented to me that when he travels to America the Czechs whom he meets on college campuses are generally former Communists. Naturally their perceptions of Prague's present democratic and procapitalist government are grim. Naturally, too, the politically correct American profs gullibly accept every grim perception.

There are 15,000 Americans living in Prague at present, and they are a rather sad lot. At least that is the way *Respekt*, one of Prague's most influential weeklies, depicted them recently. They live fantasy lives modeled after the expatriate lives once led by Hemingway and Orwell in Paris, but that was long ago. Hemingway's peers were justifiably distressed by World War I and all the broken lives it left. The recent Cold War ended on an altogether happier note. What is it that has these contemporary expatriates down in the dumps?

The answer is lack of imagination and lack of talent. There are no Hemingways or Orwells here. Paris's expatriates were called the "lost generation." Prague's call themselves "Generation X." There is no poetry in that absurd concoction, only juvenile angst. Paris's expatriates hung out at a cosmopolitan bookstore and one or two select cafes. Prague's patheticos hang out at a laundromat (Laundry King's, by name), at a joint called New York Pizza, and at two bars: Joe's and the American Gay Bar.

According to *Respekt*, many of the American expatriates are "missionaries" for "Green Terrorism," "Feminism," "politicizing AIDS," and other "strange religions." They are not making many converts, and, if that surprises them, I can sympathize. The dress and demeanor of many Czechs are almost hippie. When I visited the offices of *Respekt* the place looked like a veritable hippie haven, circa 1968. There was a plenitude of beards and scruffy jeans. There were granny glasses and long hair. But *Respekt* did not grow out of a 1960s youth culture seeking hallucinogenic drugs and free sex. It was born of the anti-Communist struggles of the 1980s.

Many of its still-quite-young writers first wrote in the anti-Communist underground, where they braved incarceration and beatings. Jan Machacek, *Respekt*'s economics correspondent, is versed in the writings of free-market economists such as Hayek and Friedman. His politics sound almost Reaganesque. When I left his office I noticed a bumper sticker on *Respekt*' s front door that read "Free Elections for Viet Nam." This is about the furthest thing from the minds of Prague's 15,000 American expatriates who believe freedom triumphed in Vietnam when America's Vietnamese allies were vanquished.

"Anti-Americanism is very popular among these Americans," says Michael Semin over coffee at Prague's Civic Institute, another post-Communist institution with its roots in the struggle against Communism. The Civic Institute holds public forums on democratic values and free-market economics. Its reading room contains volumes that on American campuses would be considered most incorrect. Like many politically active Czechs these days including the Czech Republic's decisive Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus, the Civic Institute espouses the ideas of America's founding fathers.

"America, Love It or Leave It," was the battle cry of the American mainstream in the 1970s. Americans who leave it today and flee to Prague might learn to love it again, if they listen to the Czech Freedom Fighters of 1989 who have replaced the totalitarians of yesterday. ❐

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Rethinking HIV

by Tom Bethell

Knowledge is never more askew than when it has been silently politicized. This is true of a good deal of government-funded science, which can serve political interests in ways that the public, and even scientists themselves, do not suspect. They put on their white coats and peer into their test tubes, scarcely recognizing the extent to which they may be following political guidelines or prudently considering the continued funding of their labs.

Openly politicized subjects, such as economics, involve a contest for the truth that is at least acknowledged to be unresolved. Nobel prizes are impartially awarded to the proponents of incompatible theories. The field is broadly divided between collectivists and individualists, and the judges seemingly recognize that there is no agreement about truth. This may be untidy, but it is surely healthier than the bogus certitude and the appeals to consensus that stifle so much of modern science.

We look at Soviet science and smugly feel superior: Lysenko was a "charlatan," but of course we have no such problem here. He took orders from Stalin; we are a democracy (mention "checks and balances"). But peer-review imposes its own conformity, and the raised eyebrows of senior colleagues can whip a youthful free-thinker into shape. Grant applications must be submitted, the National Institutes of Health must be kept happy.

The most striking instance of politicized science in recent years has been the phenomenon called AIDS, which is thought of as a disease but which more nearly resembles a federal program. It now seems likely that the 12-year government research and publicity effort has been based on the wrong hypothesis—that the various diseases called AIDS are caused by a single infectious agent, the human immunodeficiency virus. It is possible that AIDS is not infectious at all, but is the result of damage to the immune system caused by behavior. The many reasons for thinking that a great and shocking mistake has been made are set forth by Robert Root-Bernstein in a new book called *Rethinking AIDS: The Tragic Cost of Premature Consensus.*[1] Root-Bernstein is a professor of physiology at Michigan State University. Here are just a few points that are worth pondering:

The discovery of the cause of AIDS was announced at a press conference in April 1984, by Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler, at a time when the Reagan administration was under attack for not doing enough. Promising a vaccine within two years, she added: "Those who have said we weren't doing enough have not understood how sound, solid, significant medical research proceeds." Then she introduced the man who was thought to have discovered the virus, NIH virologist Robert Gallo. It turns out that Gallo's virus had been isolated at the Pasteur Institute in Paris by Luc Montagnier, who now says that HIV alone is insufficient to destroy the immune system.

Three years later, in 1987, the Food and Drug Administration, responding to political pressure from homosexual activists, approved the drug AZT for use against AIDS. Synthesized as chemotherapy in 1964, AZT had not hitherto been approved because of its toxic effects. But when the gays started protesting outside FDA's doors—well, something had to be done, because lives were at stake, and so the drug was hurriedly approved.

Two symbiotic interest groups illuminate the politics of AIDS: homosexual activists and the NIH-funded medical-scientific complex. Ten years before AIDS, in 1971, the federal government launched an expensive "war on cancer." A virus was the scientifically fashionable hypothesis because the triumph over polio was still uppermost in many researchers' minds. The polio virus had been isolated, a vaccine developed, and Salk and Sabin were heroes of science. Hordes of new virologists were being turned out by the graduate departments. Interestingly, a retrovirus—just like HIV—was the prime cancer suspect, because cancer is a growing mass of cells and retroviruses usually don't kill the cells they infect. They parasitically use the cell's DNA to crank out new copies of themselves. Viral-cancer theorists thought that, in doing so, retroviruses may mess up the DNA in some way, transforming ordinary cells into cancer cells.

But by 1981 the cancer virus was proving elusive. Frustrated researchers were therefore happy to turn to this intriguing new syndrome, at first called GRID, gay-related immune deficiency. Here was promise. *Now* they would apprehend the guilty virus and bring it into custody. And the new generation of virologists would become heroes of medicine, just like Salk and Sabin.

Virus, did someone say? That suited the gay activists just fine. Anyone can pick up a virus. It's just a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. A virus is exculpatory (nothing to do with behavior) and egalitarian (we are all at risk). The virus "cloaks AIDS activists in nobility," said ACT-UP specialist Robert Rafsky, who "confronted" Bill Clinton in the New York primary last year. So listen up, straights. That little critter will be replicating away inside you before you know

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[1] The Free Press, 512 pages, $27.50.

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it. You're next for the AIDS wards. Better start up condom and needle-exchange programs and fully fund the Ryan White Act and social-security disability payments and fork over some cash for housing people with AIDS. And, hey, while you're at it, how about spending a little more on finding a cure?

Funding for NIH and CDC duly soared, until more money was being spent on HIV than on all previous viruses combined. The white-coats out at NIH's Bethesda campus didn't mind that. Gay protests did wonders for the budget. A lucrative coalition had been forged. Larry Kramer, gay playwright, and Anthony Fauci, head government AIDS researcher, became friends.

But the story didn't have a happy ending. The cure didn't work (may in fact have killed people—long-term chemotherapy isn't normally indicated for anyone). And it turns out that we are *not* all at risk. To a remarkable extent AIDS has remained confined to homosexuals and drug addicts. The African AIDS epidemic now looks very fishy. The numbers are based on extrapolations from inaccurate reports at a handful of hospitals, in countries where officials have an incentive to increase the AIDS count. The flow of funds from the World Health Organization and foreign agencies rise proportionately. Die in an auto accident in Kampala, it's said, and you may be counted as an AIDS statistic. (*Spin* magazine recently had some good reporting on the phony African AIDS story.)

As those who saw ABC's "Day One" program will know, there is growing skepticism about the cause of AIDS. If HIV is added to cell-lines growing in vitro, they go on growing happily. It was this (elementary) discovery that led Montagnier to revise his opinion about HIV. In AIDS patients, the vast majority of T-cells of the immune system are not infected by HIV, nor can it be found in the semen of about 95 percent of those who test positive for the virus. It looks very much as though the virus is swiftly neutralized by antibodies; an antibody test is used because the virus itself is so hard to find. Neither chimps infected with HIV, nor health-care workers who accidentally stick themselves with needles, get AIDS. (The CDC claims there have been seven cases of the latter in a 12-year epidemic.)

The evidence that HIV causes AIDS is simply this: HIV is well correlated with AIDS. But as Root-Bernstein points out, there are other viruses that are at least as well correlated as HIV. Viruses are like fingerprints in the living room. You can find a lot of them if you bring in a suspicious detective to conduct a search. What relevance they have is another matter. But there's a more important point about the "correlation" between HIV and AIDS. That correlation is itself largely an artifact of the definition of AIDS.

AIDS was first defined in 1982, and redefined, more and more expansively, in 1984, 1985, 1987, and 1993. The frequent redefinition was itself a reflection of the politics of AIDS. The epidemic was failing to match CDC predictions, and was rather conspicuously remaining confined to the two main risk groups: drug addicts and gay bathhouse habitués. Expanding the definition to include cervical cancer, pulmonary TB, and other diseases was therefore congenial to the main political interest groups. But as the definition was expanded, the caveat was added that the new cases must be HIV positive. To that extent, the correlation of the "disease" (which is not a unitary phenomenon at all) and the virus is tautological.

An earlier definition of AIDS did not require HIV positivity, but that was because the syndrome was first defined before the virus had even been discovered. By 1987, in at least half the so-called AIDS cases, no HIV test had been conducted; patients were "presumed" to be positive. The CDC now says that there have been over 43,000 such presumptive diagnoses. Last year, however, there was quite a lot of publicity about cases in which no trace of HIV could be found, despite careful testing, in cases that otherwise looked very much like AIDS (emaciated gays with pneumocystis and ruined immune systems). At that point the CDC swallowed hard and said that this was *an entirely new disease*, which it dubbed idiopathic CD4 T-cell lymphocytopenia, or ICL, in case you were wondering.

"If they had admitted that the ICL cases were really AIDS cases, then that would be the absolute proof that HIV is not a necessary cause of AIDS," Root-Bernstein told me. "Everyone would understand that, and it would undermine everything that they have done in the last ten years. So they could not accept that. And you'll notice that within two weeks they had a new definition of a new disease. I think in the history of medicine that has to be the fastest."

This is politics, not science. It is also a great scandal. The CDC has now jiggered the definitions of AIDS and ICL in such a way that the correlation of HIV and AIDS is a tautology—true by virtue of the definition of AIDS.

Root-Bernstein also effectively rebuts one of the key assumptions of the official science: that AIDS patients had pristine immune systems until this deadly virus came along and shredded the defending T-cells. An infectious agent was assumed, as early as March 1981, because opportunistic diseases such as pneumocystis, hitherto rare, abruptly became more frequent among gay men and intravenous drug users. The suggestion that this might have something to do with the drugs themselves, and with the increasingly abandoned "gay lifestyle," seems to have been given remarkably short shrift. The fact is, Root-Bernstein argues, "every AIDS patient has multiple causes of immune suppression other than HIV, many of which precede HIV infection and some of which occur in the total absence of HIV." (Hemophiliacs and transfusion recipients also have immunosuppressive factors.)

As to the gays, I'll skip the details, but let me quote selectively from the book's index, under Homosexuals: "amebiasis in; anal intercourse and; antibiotics used by; blood transfusions for; cytomegalovirus in; drug abuse by; fisting and; gay bowel syndrome in; giardiasis in; hepatitis B virus in; malnutrition in; nitrites used by; promiscuity of; rectal injuries of; rimming and; semen antibodies in; sexually transmitted diseases in; shigellosis in . . . " Somehow, the news media managed to overlook all this.

U.C. Berkeley professor Peter Duesberg thinks that HIV plays no role in AIDS, that drugs alone sufficiently explain immune-system collapse, and that homosexuals take lots of them. Root-Bernstein has a complex theory of co-factors, including the immunosuppressive effects of semen and other agents, perhaps including HIV, leading to a civil war within the immune system. It's possible that HIV plays no role at all, he admits.

There's much, much more in the book, and in a newsletter of the same name, *Rethinking AIDS*, available from 2040 Polk St., #321, San Francisco, CA 94109. ($20 for 12 issues.) ❐

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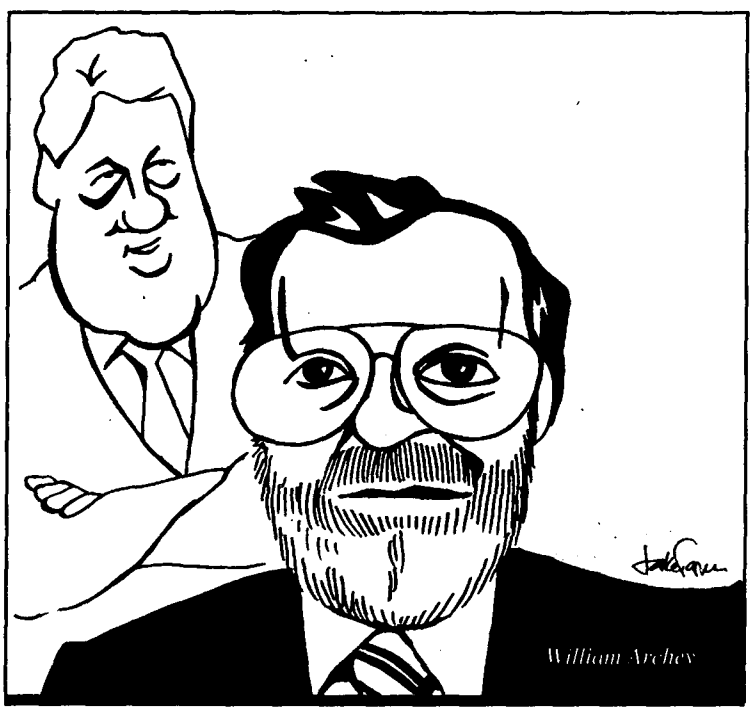
Clinton's Echo Chamber

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the leading free-market lobby of the Reagan years, has been taken over by influence-peddling Clintonites—and Republicans and businessmen have lost no time in fighting back.

by Daniel Wattenberg



Already under heavy attack from its erstwhile allies in the Republican Party for abandoning bedrock free-market principles, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently flaunted its budding romance with the Clinton administration on a balmy April evening in Washington. While Senate Republicans filibustered against Clinton's $16 billion emergency stimulus package, the powerful business organization invited the president up to its in-house television studio to pitch his summer youth jobs program in an interactive infomercial (billed, inevitably, as a "satellite town meeting") downlinked to audiences at almost 3,000 sites.

With Education Secretary Richard Riley serving as moderator, Clinton and his sidekick, Labor Secretary Robert Reich, didn't break a sweat. Clinton called for abolishing the "artificial dividing line between what's work and what's learning." Reich sounded his familiar alarm about our "jobless recovery," although he did not explain how frustrated job-seekers would be helped by flooding the summer job market with high school kids.

Senator Phil Gramm defines Clinton's strategy for prying segments of the business community loose from the Republican coalition as "seduction and intimidation." Support the Clinton economic agenda, and your fondest wish will be granted: import protection, research subsidies, fat government contracts, you name it. Oppose him, and he'll do to your business what he and his wife did to the pharmaceutical industry, whose stock prices still haven't recovered from the Clintons' February rhetorical onslaught ("profiteering at the expense of children") and threatened price controls. It's a strategy that has shown some signs of working, but even the President must be a little surprised by

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how responsive the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has been to his mating call.

Hunter Fired

The Chamber has long been the country's largest and most effective business advocate of the free market—its own congressional rating system has long been considered a benchmark of how pro- or anti-business the various congressmen are. But now free marketers say the Chamber has sold out. For more than a year, the signs of the Chamber's metamorphosis multiplied: the decimation of its economic policy staffs, its embrace of a Democratic industrial-policy blueprint, its neutral stance during the presidential campaign, its post-election encomia to President Clinton, and the tightening grip of Senior Vice President for Policy William Archey, who has fashioned a career as a liberal Trojan horse within the walled cities of conservatism.

But the free marketers kept their growing suspicions *en famille*. They hoped that Chamber Vice President and Chief Economist Lawrence Hunter could arrest the drift from within and feared that an open attack on the Chamber would only compromise him and his allies on the staff. On February 4, however, Archey fired Larry Hunter.

Days before, Julie Gackenbach, the Chamber's top tax expert, had brought Hunter an industry coalition letter opposing new energy taxes. He signed. Routine, according to Hunter. Chamber vice presidents signed dozens of such letters a year without going up the line for approval. When Gackenbach returned the next day and told Hunter the group wanted the Chamber represented at a press conference, he told her to go ahead. The Chamber's taxation committee had just reaffirmed the organization's opposition to energy taxes, he explained. She could base her statement on the committee's resolution.

On seeing the proposed statement, Hunter says, "Archey goes nuts. He calls me down and says this isn't the only reason, but this is such bad judgment and this goes so far beyond policy that this is the last straw." Later that day, Matt Kibbe, the Chamber's director of federal budget policy and a Hunter ally, resigned.

By signing the letter, Archey told a staff meeting, Hunter had hurt Chamber hopes of "being a player" with the Clinton administration, according to an unsigned paper that has circulated widely in Washington. "The business community would probably be supportive of the White House tax package when it was completed," Archey added.

"The firing of Larry Hunter is only the latest in the Chamber's flight from the principles of low taxes, limited government and the Republican Party," as the anonymous paper awkwardly put it. "The Chamber has either failed to lobby aggressively, taken a walk, or flip-flopped on a number of key issues, such as free trade, 'no new taxes,' increasing the minimum wage, health-care mandates, family leave, and school choice." Archey is "trying to turn the Chamber away from old principles and old positions," says Hunter. "And I kept digging in my heels."

"They fired him the day his father-in-law died and basically told him he had to clean out his office right then, even though he should have been home with his family," says Richard Rahn, Hunter's predecessor. "They sent somebody out to pick up the fax machine from his house the day of the funeral, when his wife's relatives were all there at the house," Rahn says.

An incredulous Rahn called Chamber President Richard Lesher. "It wasn't a Lesher style of doing things," he thought. The "shabby, ungracious" sacking was "despicable," he told him.

"I can tell you on a stack of Bibles he was not fired for opposing tax policy," counters Lesher. "He was not fired for being a conservative, and he was not fired for being incompetent." On the advice of lawyers, he says, he can't be more specific. "It's a very, very unhealthy situation. A disgruntled former employee can say any damn thing he wants, but don't make him out to be a martyr."

"[Archey] told Mr. Martin that he would take care of his distribution license problem if Mr. Martin would find him some clients to start his own business. He told Mr. Martin that the Swiss government has problems with their licenses and he would help, pending clients."

"No one knew of that death," Lesher insists. (Hunter says the death in his family was common knowledge at the Chamber.) "And he had equipment at his house that was to be returned, and we went out when he told our people to go out, period."

And another thing: "Did you hear he got six months' pay?"

The Selling of William Archey

When Archey fired Hunter, he was rid of an obstacle: the Chamber soon abandoned its opposition to new taxes and came out in support of health-care mandates on business. On the other hand, Lesher and Archey had also lost their human shield.

Victims of Archey's ideological cleansing portray him as a bilious bureaucratic Iago who has poisoned Lesher against faithful friends and surreptitiously pulled procedural ropes to bring Chamber policy into alignment with Clinton-era government paternalism. They say he is a protectionist and closet liberal infatuated with the faddish national industrial policy designs of Clinton mercantilists Robert Reich and Ira Magaziner, both of whom Archey claims as old friends. "I don't give a rat's ass what Republicans think," is a favorite Archey refrain, according to an ex-Chamber hand.

Archey's agenda began to take shape during the campaign. "It was clear that his objective was simply to neutral-

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ize the Chamber," according to Hunter. "He used the bureaucratic maneuver perfectly to prevent the staff from commenting on the Clinton economic plan. After Clinton was elected, then it was pretty clear that the strategy had changed. No longer was it a matter of neutralizing the Chamber, he was going to deliver the Chamber."

During the transition, Archey touted himself to colleagues as a possible Clinton choice for secretary of commerce or U.S. trade representative, and could not contain his enthusiasm for the incoming administration. "This is not Mr. Dukakis coming in," he told the *National Journal*. "This is not Mr. Carter coming in. This is different." And he sounded a classic canard of the Reagan-bashing Washington elite: "I mean, in the last sixteen years we have made contempt for our government into a civic virtue."

Archey has made a métier of boring from within. Former Archey associates in Ronald Reagan's Commerce Department have seen the pattern before: the establishment of a toehold under a false flag, the calculated seduction of a powerful patron, the knifing of conservative rivals and subversion of their agenda.

When William Von Raab took over as Ronald Reagan's customs commissioner, he found Archey rooted in place as his deputy. A Carter political appointee, Archey had taken advantage of a new opportunity for political appointees to burrow into the bureaucracy as career civil servants."When they set up the SES [Senior Executive Service] program, he somehow got himself converted in that program," Von Raab recalls.

Von Raab was stuck with a deputy he remembers affectionately as a "Bolshevik madman." While he was "very bright, he was just too liberal, and I felt that it was a conservative administration," says Von Raab. So Archey was moved to the Commerce Department, where the incoming assistant secretary for export administration, Lawrence Brady, was determined to cooperate with the Pentagon in trying to curtail the flow of sophisticated Western technology with military uses to the Soviet bloc.

The watchdog that Brady thought he had hired turned out to be a "gateway" for high-tech transfers to the Soviet bloc. But by the time Archey's policy agenda became clear, Brady couldn't touch him. He had successfully cultivated a powerful protector, much as he would later cultivate Lesher.

Archey found that he and the wife of Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige shared a special concern for victims of Down's syndrome. "He played to the hilt the fact that he had a brother who was mentally retarded," recalls a colleague at Commerce. "As a result, Archey became very chummy with the secretary, and he basically cut Brady out," says Von Raab. (Archey's expressions of concern could be extreme. A colleague recalls that when the Reagan budget cuts affected funding for the program his brother was in, Archey did an impersonation of his brother denouncing the cuts.)

"You gotta give the devil his due," says a former Commerce Department official. "By hook or by crook he has been able to establish relationships with people who count, and he did then." Brady left, and Archey was elevated to acting assistant secretary for trade administration, the top job in the bureau.

In a meeting with Hillary Clinton's health-care task force, a Chamber delegation promised Chamber support for administration plans to provide universal health insurance and require all employers to insure their workers.

Ultimately, Archey proved the author of his own undoing as a federal official. On November 26, 1985, a whistle-blower letter reached the general counsel's office at Commerce. The letter described a meeting Archey had had two months earlier in the Swiss Embassy with Eric Martin, the Swiss economic counselor:

> He told Mr. Martin that he was not planning on staying at the Department of Commerce forever and gave Mr. Martin his résumé. He told Mr. Martin that he would take care of his distribution license problem if Mr. Martin would find him some clients to start his own business. He told Mr. Martin that the Swiss government has problems with their licenses and he would help, pending clients.
>
> A couple of weeks later, Eric Martin was fishing with Ted Wu, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement, and Fred Oberin, Special Assistant to Mr. Wu. Mr. Martin mentioned to Ted Wu that he had met with William Archey and asked Mr. Wu if it was usual practice to find Mr. Archey clients in order to get the Swiss distribution license problem taken care of.

Douglas Riggs, the general counsel, immediately summoned Archey, who claimed to be the victim of a right-wing witch hunt. "In the process of probably an hour, hour-and-a-half meeting, it was clear that whatever the allegations were and [after] you got through the bluff and bluster that 'They're head-hunting me, no merit to it,' there turned out in fact to be enough of a kernel of truth to take it to Mac [Baldrige], and Mac got into it," says a source close to this previously undisclosed investigation.

"It sent a shock wave through the Commerce Department because Archey was one of [Undersecretary of Commerce] Lionel Olmer's right-hand people and also someone Baldrige worked a lot with," recalls a former Commerce official. "Baldrige was I think personally devastated that Archey was tied up in this."

Fortunately for Archey, the Commerce Department had no more interest in an embarrassing public disclosure of high-level influence-peddling than he did. The matter was handled quietly as an internal fact-finding investigation.

Reached in Switzerland recently, Eric Martin categorical-

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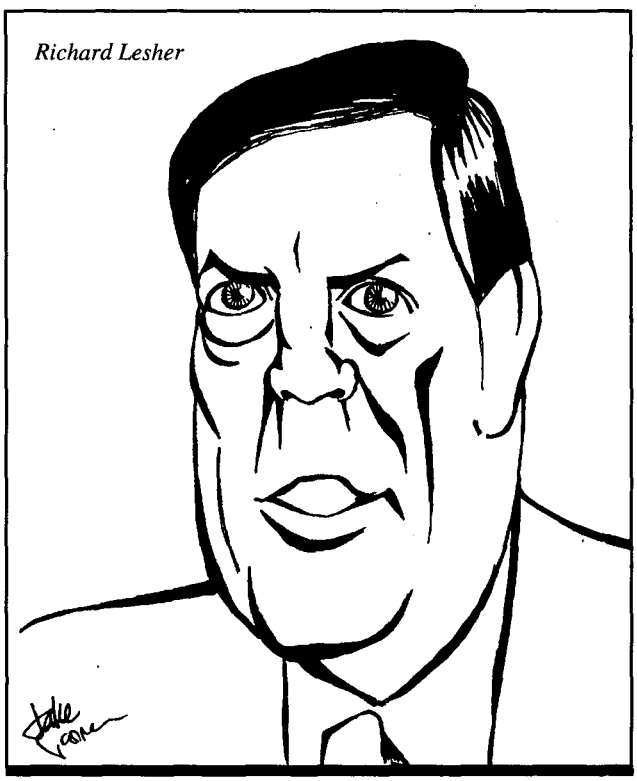
ly denied that Archey and he had ever had such a meeting, that Archey had ever given him a résumé, and that Archey had proposed to him an improper quid pro quo. However, several times in the course of being interviewed, Martin altered his story, raising questions about his reliability.

At first, Martin claimed he had never even met with Archey when Martin's supervisor was not present. Later, he admitted to having met one-on-one with Archey "two or three times." Initially, Martin claimed he himself had left Washington sometime in the fall of 1985, and stated explicitly that he had left Washington before Archey departed from his job at the Commerce Department early in 1986. Later, Martin said he did not leave Washington until 1987, at least a year after Archey had left Commerce for the U.S. Chamber. Martin also denied ever having been on a fishing trip with Ted Wu. In an interview, however, Wu confirmed the fishing trip.



Richard Lesher

Et Tu, Lesher?

Lesher once told a reporter that when he took over the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in the mid-1970s, "I believed that if any organization had the potential to turn the country away from its drift toward socialism, this was the institution." Today, the market intelligentsia wonders aloud if Lesher's Chamber is up to the more modest task of resisting the country's drift toward Clintonism.

On February 23, Bill Clinton spoke to the Chamber's National Action Rally. No Republicans were invited to speak. ("My gosh, I stopped counting the number of times applause broke out," Lesher exclaimed.) The same day, with public enthusiasm for the Clinton economic plan at peak levels in the afterglow of Clinton's State of the Union success, the Chamber's board of directors issued a statement on the plan. It applauded Clinton's goals, asked for more spending cuts, and insisted that "spending cuts be implemented before any new or increased taxes are enacted." A threshold had been crossed. In calling for cuts *before* new taxes, the board had issued Clinton a warrant to hike taxes. It was a $200-300 billion preposition.

Less than three weeks earlier, the Chamber's Taxation Committee had met to discuss taxes, deficit reduction, and economic stimulus. The committee approved a statement. Like the later board statement, it applauded Clinton's goals of deficit reduction and job creation. Unlike the later statement, it rejected tax increases outright: "The Chamber reaffirms its policy which calls for no increases in federal taxes. It has been demonstrated often in recent years (most recently in 1990) that tax increases do not produce deficit reduction because of the depressing effect tax increases have on the economy."

"This apparent change in policy as far as I know hasn't followed the rules of the organization," says Rahn. "It's a clear movement away from the existing position, and from what I understand the board did not formally vote on any movement in position, which would have taken a two-thirds vote to overturn the tax committee proposal."

The taxation committee statement was sent to the board with a cover memo from the committee chairman Thomas P. Brock. In the Brock memo, the committee rejection of new taxes was presented as a holding action pending the unveiling of the Clinton plan, devised by a divided and hesitant committee. Hunter suspects the work of a fine Italian hand. The memo explains "why the tax committee didn't really mean what it said in the attached recommendations," he says. "They did a number on the chairman, somehow got him to write this memorandum."

Lesher cites four different Chamber committees and a membership poll as backing the new policy which, he says, is "slightly different" but "not inconsistent" with the anti-tax stance it replaced. But Lesher is unable to suppress the fatalism underlying the circumlocutions. "Don't throw your body in front of a train, if it's not going to do you any good," he says.

Columns by Paul Gigot and Evans and Novak ridiculed the Chamber for falling in with corporate collaborationists queuing up to collect favors from the Clinton administration. After Rush Limbaugh picked up the Evans and Novak piece, angry callers jammed Chamber phone lines for two hours with a message from the grass roots. "I've heard they had over a thousand resignations that day alone, smaller guys just saying, 'That's it,' " says Hunter.

In an effort to put out the fire, Lesher sent out a rare letter to all Chamber members. "There was more anger when we went back to them and said that Evans and Novak chose to distort and to lie," he says. At an estimated $60-70,000, the mailing was an expensive rebuttal, particularly given its equivocal results. A source reports that at a meeting, Chamber Senior Vice President for Development Bruce Josten gave a breakdown of the approximately 120 letters received *after* Lesher's apologia. "He claimed forty or forty-five were resignations and these would be $50 memberships," says the source. "Another thirty were very sup-

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portive. . . . The remainder were 'What the hell are you doing?' but without resignations." Josten declined to return a phone call, but, says the source, "Josten will tell you he called everybody and turned them around."

Membership levels are a touchy subject at the Chamber. In one year (September 1991-August 1992) seventy-two large dues-paying "national account companies" cancelled their Chamber memberships, citing tough economic times and "dissatisfaction," according to an internal memo to Archey from Josten. The cancellations and reduced dues from other firms cost the Chamber $700,000 in revenue.

To mask losses, the Chamber created two new categories of membership with lower dues. "We have three categories of members, and overall our membership has been increasing dramatically," says Lesher. "We went from 185,000 companies to 215,000 companies, period. And it's continuing to climb." Pressed on the rationale for the new, baby memberships, he demands, "Should we cut those off?"

Four days after Lesher's missive, the Chamber raised fresh doubts about its direction. In a meeting with Hillary Clinton's health-care task force, a Chamber delegation promised Chamber support for administration plans to provide universal health insurance and require all employers to insure their workers.

"This has become a Republican Leadership issue. We intend to pursue our plans to see what we can do to make the Chamber a more effective advocate for free-market, pro-growth economic policies."

Send in D. Armey

Among entrepreneurial conservatives in Congress, disaffection with the Chamber has escalated steadily over the last few months. An early meeting between Lesher and House Republican leaders Newt Gingrich, Dick Armey, and Tom Delay left the congressmen "more disturbed after talking with him than before," according to a source. In a March 10 letter to Lesher, Conservative Opportunity Society members expressed "shock" at the Chamber's endorsement of tax increases and health-care mandates and warned him not to "sacrifice your traditional supporters in your quest to develop ties to the Administration."

An Archey visit to the group's next meeting backfired badly, with Archey confirming in person what members had previously heard only in the press. Members argued the Chamber was throwing away what little leverage it might have with Clinton by ducking issues on which it differed with Clinton and cheerleading for him whenever there was some marginal agreement. Archey boasted of the rewards of accommodationism. He defended the Chamber's decision not to oppose the BTU tax, claiming that by working with the Treasury Department, the Chamber had successfully moved the burden of the tax off producers and onto consumers.

Finally, Lesher himself met with a group of members whose pro-business voting records, as measured by the Chamber's rating system, had earned them awards. Lesher tried to fend off charges that the Chamber's Washington staff was pursuing its own agenda with his standard claim that the Chamber membership was driving the policy shift. But the congressmen had heard it before. "What he did in fact was poll their membership immediately after the president's State of the Union speech," says Kansas Republican Pat Roberts. "A speech where if you closed your eyes and listened to it you thought it was Jack Kemp, as opposed to a very liberal interventionist domestic policy reverting back to the Great Society."

Lesher's performance dispelled the comforting illusion that perhaps he was little more than a detached and unwitting creature of the purposeful Archey. The sense of betrayal was given blunt expression by Roberts. "I told him under the circumstances he didn't need to come into my office with any more awards, that I wouldn't hang the damn things on the walls."

On March 25, the House Republican leadership sent Lesher a final warning. "Silence speaks volumes," they wrote. In contrast to its rival business organizations the National Federation of Independent Business and the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber had been invisible during the key congressional votes on the Clinton budget plan. "Your current posture is unacceptable," the Republicans continued. "Judging by the comments of many of our colleagues, we have a feeling that this situation is about to hit a critical mass. Tactical decisions made in today's political environment will reverberate for years; once made, the ramifications could be quite severe. . . . This has become a Republican Leadership issue. We intend to pursue our plans to see what we can do to make the Chamber a more effective advocate for free-market, pro-growth economic policies."

Board Chairman Ivan Gorr responded for the Chamber. "This apparent attempt to dictate to us what our policies should be is deeply offensive," he wrote. "The irony of your approach will not be lost on our members—that a small group of legislators, who espouse the principle of limiting government interference in business, is attempting to interfere in the democratic policy-making process of a business organization. . . . Your letter also conveys the impression that you believe the Chamber is meant to be an unofficial arm of the Conservative Opportunity Society."

Gorr did put his finger on the disorienting role reversal in the relationship between House Republicans and the Chamber. Now the pressure group, the Chamber, finds itself under unaccustomed pressure to keep the faith. But in decrying interference in the Chamber's "democratic policy-making process," he disingenuously obscured the reason for the Republicans' approach. Supported by the results of a December 1992 poll of Chamber members, the Republicans

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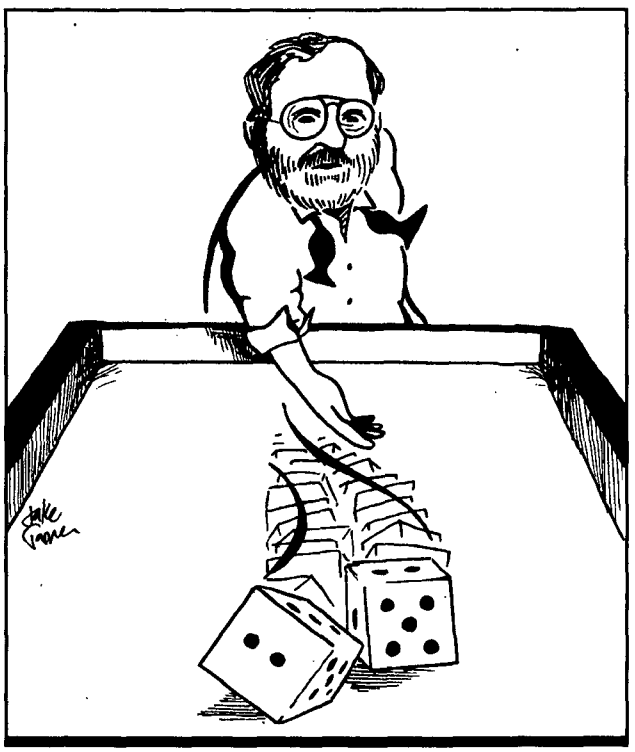
believe the Washington staff of the organization has veered radically away from its membership. (Asked, for example, "Does the presidential election results [sic] make you more or less confident that significant progress will be made soon on resolving the nation's economic problems?" 73 percent answered "less confident," 19 percent answered "more confident.") The Chamber high command's insistence that their policy shift is member-driven looks positively cynical given that Chamber telemarketers continue to rely on *fear* of the Clinton economic agenda as the basis of their membership sales pitches.

The Gorr letter, Delay concludes, is "a declaration of war."

Changing Times

"To be effective, you've got to stand up and be counted," Lesher told a reporter in 1981. "You've got to be willing to take on people in office who can hurt you." Lesher did so, and in the process acquired a mystique among market liberals as a wing-walker.



Under him, the Chamber gave crucial early backing to the Steiger and Kemp-Roth tax cuts. It became home to supply-side buccaneers like Rahn. Its massive six-month grassroots lobbying campaign for Reagan's 1981 tax and spending cuts left political observers groping for superlatives. And he opposed both Reagan and Bush when they raised taxes and survived them both.

"The people who wanted to see Lesher gone more than anybody else were the Washington representatives of these big corporations," says Hunter. "These guys first cut their deals on Capitol Hill and then go back and sell their home office rather than vice versa. Their interest is making the deal, making a small little change in the tax code that means billions for their industry or their company, and they will trade their grandmother for that. And does that mean the rest of the country gets their huge energy tax increases? So be it. Those taxes are diffuse."

But Lesher saw the Chamber as "more than a lobby." While more conventional business lobbies deployed guys in tasseled loafers armed with expense accounts and depreciation schedules, Lesher deployed ideas. "We are a Jeffersonian organization," Rahn told a reporter in 1981. "An attempt to build a countervailing force to big government."

Beginning in the late seventies, Chamber membership took off, before leveling in the mid-eighties. As chief economist of the Chamber, Rahn would often participate in wooing big companies to the Chamber. "The pitch was the Chamber was your bastion of free enterprise and the representative of business against the government and fought for lower taxes, less regulation, and smaller government, and we used to be very critical of the NAM and the Business Roundtable and other groups" apt to compromise basic principles, he remembers. "We were a free-trade, low-tax, low-regulation, low-spend organization, and that's how we gained membership. If you signed up as a Chamber member because you were given that pitch and suddenly you find the Chamber where it appears to be at the moment, I expect you'd have a certain sense of betrayal."

Bill Archey is an avid gambler (he once told Hunter he had developed a kidney infection from staying so long at the gaming tables in Atlantic City without getting up to relieve himself), but in betting on Clinton at the top of the market, he seems to have run out of luck. Since Lesher and Archey began blowing kisses to the Clintons, Senate Republicans have unified to kill the "emergency stimulus" bill. Public support for the Clinton "deficit reduction" plan has disintegrated, Ross Perot has attacked it, and conservative Democrats, uncomfortable with the plan from the start, have begun to edge away. Clinton's approval ratings have fallen further faster than those of any new president in decades, and Clinton's budget director Leon Panetta, predicting legislative problems across a wide front from aid to Russia to the North American Free Trade Agreement, is urging postponement of Hillary Rodham Clinton's pricy plans for mandated health insurance.

Republicans are organizing themselves to fight the Clintons' expanding menu of new taxes, and Larry Hunter, newly installed as director of the Senate Joint Economic Committee's Republican staff, will be among the leaders in the battle. Lesher has his "seat at the table," and the editorial approval of the *Washington Post*, which has extolled his newfound "pragmatism," but such "pragmatism" carries a price. He may be able to hang on to his $413,000-a-year job as president of the Chamber, but he has become a general without an army. His old friends in the movement to limit the size of government—whom he has vituperated lately as "wackos"—are ready to hang him by his heels at the first suitable opportunity. Just two years away from an honored retirement as the peevish but unflinching De Gaulle of the free market, he may now be remembered as its Pétain. ❐

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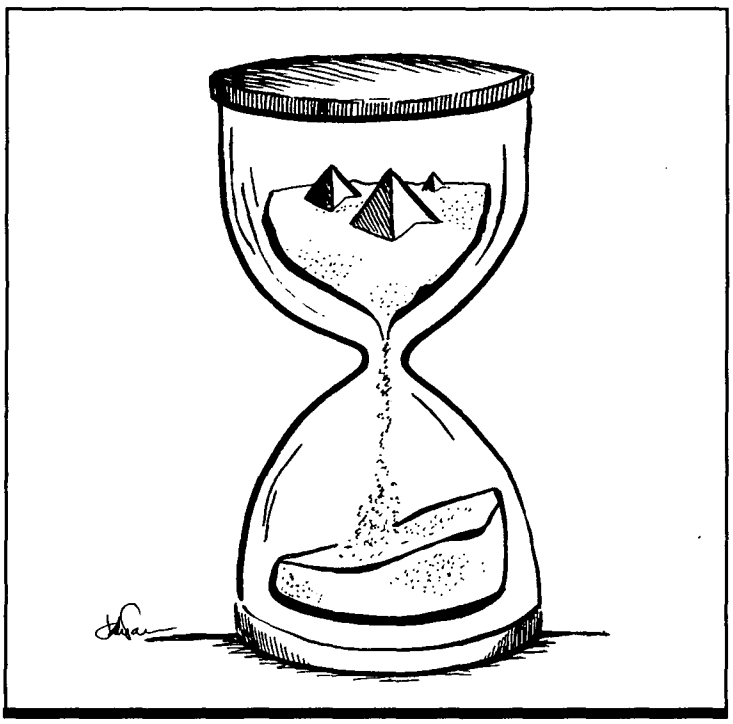
Edward Norden

America's Oldest (and Newest) Christians

As Egypt crumbles under fundamentalist pressure, where else can the Copts go?



Brooklyn

It was standing room only at St. George's on a bitterly raw Palm Sunday back in April. But this Coptic church is also packed on less important Sundays. There are worshippers and faithful socializers who come by subway—we are speaking of the Bay Ridge neighborhood in deepest Brooklyn—and there are those who drive over, parking up and down the neat, Italian-American streets with their tomato vines in the backyards, plaster saints on the lawn, and at least one decal on a storm window telling the world, "I'm NRA and I vote." This is Archie Bunker country, home to cops and firemen, studded with pizza joints.

Enter St. George's, however, and it's as if you were in neither Brooklyn nor Italy but Egypt. Here were the positive clouds of incense associated with the Eastern branches of Christianity. Here were all the dark-skinned men sitting on one side of the aisle, all the dark-skinned women on the other, the gilded icons and murals of the Apostles, of the Last Supper, of the blonde, blue-eyed Madonna and her blue-eyed Child, of St. George spearing a writhing green dragon. Here were the candles. Here was the jovial, childless Father Mina in his white-and-gold hood and vestments at the altar, chanting the tremendously old prayers in Arabic, backed up by the young deacon Magdi and the acolytes. Above all, here were the kids, kids underfoot, everywhere kids, kids being the only thing besides history, wit, and misery Egypt has plenty of. There were infants who had just been baptized, and little girls in snow-white dresses with superbly intelligent chocolate-brown eyes who joined their fidgety older and younger brothers in nagging their loving parents for greenbacks to stuff into the poor box.

Yet there were also signs for anybody in the know that St. George's isn't really in the Old Country. For example, there were the warm coats racked in the vestibule. For another thing, Father Mina every so often switched the chanting into accented but definite English. Also, if centuries and millennia of usage mark the churches and monasteries of Egypt, it being hard to build or even repair a church or synagogue in a Moslem country, the interior of St. George's is brand new. Nor would you be likely to see a kid in Egypt wearing a satinized Mets jacket or another with his trousers held up by Bart Simpson suspenders.

Edward Norden is a frequent contributor to The American Spectator *and* Commentary.

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But the subtlest and best sign that this church is in the U.S., not in Cairo or Alexandria or Assuit, was the relative absence of worry on the faces of adults like Edward or even of his lately arrived, very homesick brother with the five o'clock shadow. The Copts in the land where their church was born, where it never gets truly cold, and where until very recently all of them lived are going through a difficult time. Father Mina is glad to tell you that his people are well acquainted with trouble—in fact, ever since their conversion from sun-worship by St. Mark, they have had to put up with discrimination in the best of times, pillage and massacre and martyrdom in the worst. Father Mina's namesake was martyred by the Romans before Constantine had that dream. It's well known, the jolly father had said in the library upstairs a few days previously, that the dust from the ruins of St. Mina's shrine, west of Alexandria near where Montgomery stopped Rommel, cures leprosy and other skin ailments. The father had worn his weekday black robes and a puffy black turban and silver cross and had stressed that the Copts are the original, the only true Egyptians. They aren't Arabs, and would not abandon Christianity for Islam when the Arabs burst out of the desert and conquered the banks of the Nile some thirteen centuries ago.

Granted, the European and American historians are dubious about St. Mark converting the Copts. They agree, however, that these are very old Christians who have always tended to get it coming and going. Chronically harassed by the Moslems, they were also maltreated by the blue-eyed Crusaders. Yet if there is anything the hospitable and talkative Father Mina relishes discussing as much as the lives and miraculous works of the martyrs, it's his people's attachment to their homeland through thick and thin—5,000 years old, persecuted for the last 2,000 years, the Copts only started forming their diaspora after Gamal Abdel Nasser's revolution in 1952, and only really started leaving in droves around 1968.

"I'm a religious man, not a politician," the priest begged off when asked what finally kindled this exodus. And then he went right on to explain that middle-class Coptic parents realized that in a new, post-colonial Egypt, where Islam was in the constitution as the state religion and pan-Arabism all the rage, their children would suffer from a very thick, quite low glass ceiling. Hence the Copts whom Father Mina and his wife found living in New York in 1972, when he was sent to minister to them, had emigrated to give themselves and especially their kids a fair chance, and not because of actual Moslem violence, which lay in the past and the future. Yes, Coptic priests are encouraged to marry—"It's better that way, don't you think?" No, Father Mina and his wife, who holds a master's degree in nursing and a Ph.D. in hospital administration, have no children. With the same jolly, indeed delightful smile, he said that everything in the New World is all right, however. If on his arrival there were only four Coptic churches in North America, now there are seventy-five, leading him to estimate that while there are nine million Copts remaining in Egypt, the diaspora contains a million.

Both of these population figures are certainly inflated. On the other hand, no one disputes that the number of Copts in Egypt is large, at least equal to the number of Jews in Israel, and that converted and purpose-built churches bearing the stubby double cross have been sprouting across North America lately—there's even a desert monastery halfway between L.A. and Las Vegas. These churches serve a diaspora swollen by the violent turn of events in Egypt, where Islamic groupings like the one inspired long-distance by Sheikh Rahman of Jersey City are out to make a theocratic state on the Iranian or Sudanese model. Sheikh Rahman's admirers went around Egypt torching churches and murdering Copts pretty much with impunity well before President Hosni Mubarak, whose regime gets more than $2 billion annually from the U.S., pulled out the stops last year and sent in the army. It's no exaggeration to say that Father Mina's homeland is today in a state of siege.

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Even more Copts would be moving to America, Father Mina said, if they didn't have to compete for visas with both sensible and fundamentalist Egyptian Moslems. Only those Egyptians who can show a close relative already here may hope to come now—the rest, unless they're prepared to sneak in, must wait in the pipeline for years. Meanwhile, the terror and incitement to terror continue. The state-censored TV allows the sheikhs to tell viewers that Christians are infidels, that their property and blood are forfeit. Indeed, said Father Mina, who revisits the Vatican-like headquarters of the church in Alexandria regularly, the crackdown, the state of siege that Amnesty International complains of, has nothing to do with protecting the Copts. It came only after tourists and policemen began to be killed and the regime feared for its only hard-currency earner, not to mention its survival.

So Father Mina, who earned a degree in engineering before heeding the call, let himself be drawn out. Will the U.S.-backed regime be able to squelch the militant Islamic clerics and their bright-eyed followers? He wasn't sure—it was late in the day, maybe too late. Is this a religious

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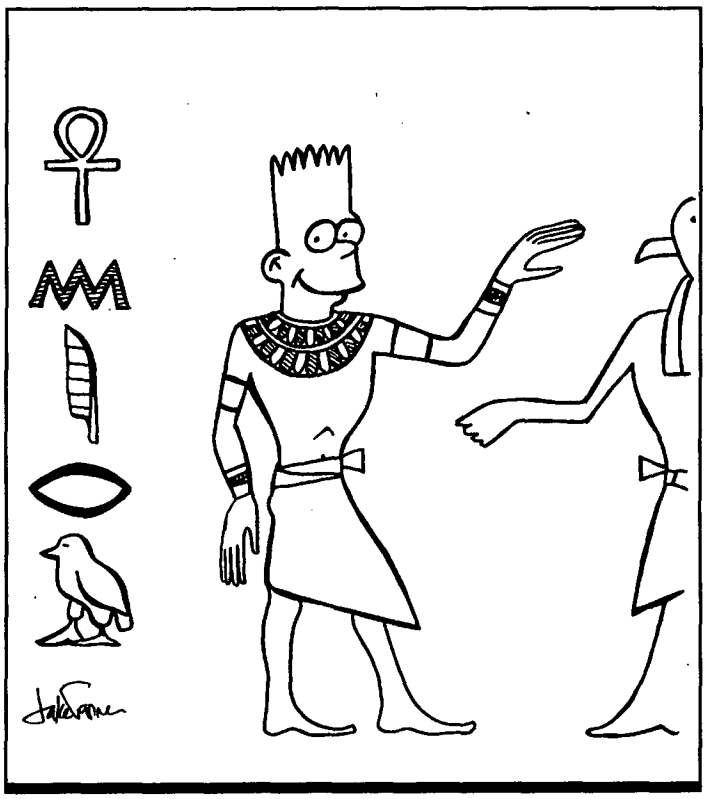
problem? No, at bottom it's of course an economic one. The sheikhs tell the masses that they're wretched because Mubarak flouts the Koran, but in fact there's too little arable land, no natural resources, private enterprise is smothered by corruption and bureaucracy, the Moslems have too many babies, and furthermore the country mortgaged its future by warring against "the Jews" for thirty years. Now that there's peace with Israel and the bill has come due, the Christians suffer the most because they're not quite as poor and they're the minority. Failing the discovery of a monstrous oil field, he didn't see Egypt making economic headway, meaning that the squeeze on his people would continue and the sheikhs might even take power somehow. Would it spell the end of the Copts in Egypt if they did? Father Mina smiled his nonstop smile. "We have had faith in the Lord for twenty centuries."



Young Magdi, the deacon of St. George's, came from Alexandria by himself last year, quitting engineering school, because he saw little future for himself in Egypt—he hopes to finish his studies and settle here. Like Father Mina, he's full of stories about the ongoing miracles of long-dead saints and Coptic popes. Unlike Father Mina, he warns about the Moslems who are coming to the U.S., which he says they hate, and who take cynical advantage of American hospitality and liberty to foment a totalitarian revolution in Egypt. Yes, he says "Moslems," not "fundamentalists" or "some Moslems." He says Americans don't know the Moslems like the Copts do, an echo of Father Mina's remark that only the Copts and the Jews from the Arab countries really know what Islam is.

When it's put to Magdi that he is making a great and perhaps unfair generalization, that surely most Moslem newcomers in this country mind their own business just as he does, he says yes, maybe, but even they curse America among themselves and were pleased about the World Trade Center bombing. He knows, having some Moslem acquaintances. The fact is that Americans are very naive and altogether too nice, and it may well be too late in Egypt—the same themes would be sounded by board members Dr. Guirguis and Dr. Youssef. What Mubarak should have done ten years ago, according to the bright-eyed young deacon with his tales of miracles, was to kill 10,000 of what are called in America the fundamentalists. Because he didn't, Mubarak now will have to kill many more, and even this may not work. All this from the tall, dark, unsmiling, clean-shaven young man in his white robe and red sash now attending the beatific Father Mina as many of the worshippers, divided by gender, lined up to take communion.

Many, by no means all. Few of the English-speaking teenagers born in this country or brought here as infants took communion. Father Mina may have said that they are proud of their heritage and love to learn about it, but now more than a few were trying to escape St. George's before the end of services and the beginning of Sunday school. A young woman teacher with the cross tattooed on the inside of her wrist—something you see a lot of in Egypt, especially in the countryside where Copts raise pigs and make wine—had posted herself at the door. She was making sure no one got out, no matter how creative his or her excuse. "Is this a jail?" asked a teenaged girl. She had insisted, in vain, that she had to leave for just a minute to place an urgent phone call.

No, it certainly wasn't a jail. Maybe in jail you could have a priest circulating and handing out unused portions of communion bread among the congregation, and having his ring kissed, as Father Mina was now doing. But following this, you'd hardly see in any jail the radiant mothers of those infants previously baptized parading up and down with their newborns as other women who have never heard of Gloria Steinem ululated with joy and menfolk squinted into camcorders.

Immediately following which, there was food and unsegregated socializing downstairs in the noisy Virgin Mary Hall. Edward, in the U.S. a decade, was there with his family, and his ex–Egyptian army officer brother, here a few months, was there with his. Edward nibbled an Egyptian sweet while heaping praise on America. The freedom, safety, rationality, size, expertise, generosity, and tolerance of this country made it the only one where he could now imagine living—the fact that he knew of fellow Copts in Brooklyn who had been mugged or whose apartments or businesses had been burglarized worried him very little. Why, look at what the American doctors had done for his son, born prematurely weighing just two

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pounds! The eight-year-old he called over and lovingly presented was stocky, the picture of health.

To which Edward's brother, the Egyptian patriot, responded by saying that America doesn't have a monopoly on such miracles. His own son, born prematurely in Egypt, had been cared for by Egyptian doctors, and look at him now. This boy was equally the picture of robust health. For seventeen years Edward's brother, who needed a shave on this holy day, served in the Egyptian army. Asked what the fate of the peace treaty with Israel would be if the bearded ones take over, he said over the din, "Straight into the garbage can." Asked what the chances are that the rank-and-file soldiers, uncomplicated Moslems, would mutiny, he shook his head. "They will do as they are told." In other words, Edward's brother was vividly homesick and wished to believe that it will be possible for him to return. His naturalized brother, on whose invitation he, his wife, and their kids were accorded visas, was complacent. "He'll stay. You know the World Trade Center? That's what the Copts in Egypt face every day!"

The brothers disagree on the inevitability of an Islamic republic in languid Egypt. But they agree that the indulgence shown by the American authorities and system towards Sheikh Rahman and his Brooklyn and Jersey City cohorts is amazing. Edward ceases heaping praise on America when it comes to the sheikh being allowed to slip into this country despite being listed as a bad guy, or the Egyptian alleged killer of Rabbi Meir Kahane being sentenced on a lesser charge, or the suspects in the World Trade Center affair being represented by excellent Jewish legal talent. Are Americans just stupid, is it a question of international politics, or does secret money passing through hidden channels explain it?

This disapproving amazement was voiced also by Doctors Guirguis and Youssef. Educated men, in some measure sophisticated, keeping tales of miracles to themselves if indeed they believe

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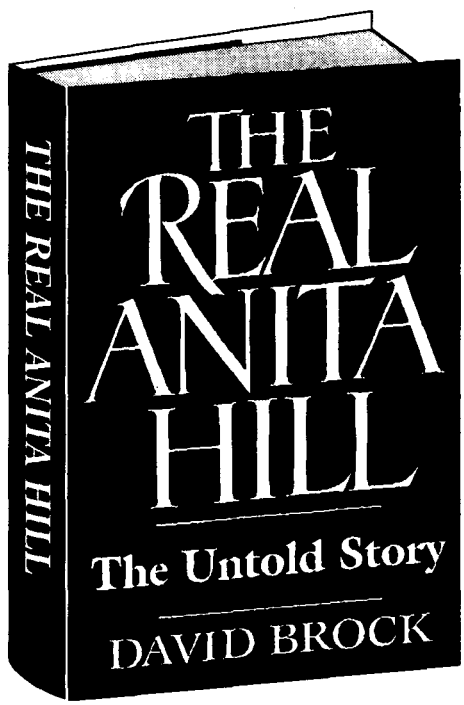

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them at all, they sit on the board of St. George's and appreciate that this is a nation of extensive civil rights, where defendants are to be considered innocent until proven otherwise, the worst criminals have the right to the best defense, and even foreigners who sneak in have the right to an entire series of hearings and appeals stretching for years before deportation. Nevertheless, Dr. Fayez Guirguis, an obstetrician-gynecologist who immigrated in 1981, was hopeful that the World Trade Center bomb would open American eyes somewhat to the fact that the militants are waging an international offensive and are not just after the Egyptian government or the Copts.

Graduated from medical school in Cairo in 1970, he had to spend the next five years in the army, "a waste." Then he took his specialty training, also in Cairo, and finally got married, but couldn't afford to set up a practice. His Coptic identity conspired with the general impossibility of making an honest, decent living in Egypt to force his emigration. Were he not a Copt, he could have won an appointment at a government hospital, obviating the need to finance a private practice. Yet plenty of Moslem doctors have also turned their backs on the mess and despair of their native land and made their way to America. The mental wrench of leaving Egypt was more distressing for Dr. Guirguis than the American paper chase—with a naturalized brother already here, an immigrant's visa wasn't hard to get. Today he has not one but two offices in Brooklyn, is prosperous enough to sit on the church board. He has American-born kids. And he remains bitter and pessimistic about Egypt, the land of the previous 1,500-plus generations of Copts.

Dr. Guirguis was hopeful that the World Trade Center bomb would open American eyes somewhat to the fact that the militants are waging an international offensive and are not just after the Egyptian government or the Copts.

As is the older Dr. Ezzat Youssef, a pin-striped oncologist. He too emigrated because he felt discriminated against, and had to confess that he had a hard time containing himself when Sheikh Rahman was given endless time on CNN and elsewhere to spread his cunning poison. The sheikh made fools out of his ignorant and much-too-respectful interviewers. Why were they so respectful? Because he's supposed to be a man of God? Why didn't they ask him about the burning of churches, the murders of Copts done with his encouragement? These are prime human rights violations that the press and government of Dr. Youssef's adopted country are supposed to be dedicated to exposing and stopping. He said he hoped that Clinton would bring them up when he welcomed Mubarak in a few days.

It was time, Dr. Youssef said, and Dr. Guirguis agreed, for Copts to be given preference by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Clearly victims of religious persecution, those wanting to leave Egypt and having no relatives in Brooklyn, L.A., or Pompano Beach ought to be admitted to the U.S. as refugees, asylum seekers. They shouldn't have to compete with Moslems for regular visas under the Egyptian quota. The present rules effectively trap the Christians of the Nile in the land which has been theirs since history began to be written, but which the doctors agreed is probably on the verge of an Islamic revolution, one that will take a fearful toll on the non-Moslems at hand before it burns itself out in bigotry and failure.

An outsider didn't have the heart to tell Drs. Youssef and Guirguis that unless the insurgents depose Mubarak, and start officially and in an organized way doing to the Copts what Khomeini did to the Iranian Jews, Zoroastrians, and Bahais, no U.S. administration is likely to order the INS to put Copts on its refugee list. It's unlikely, for the same reason that Clinton wouldn't mention the Copts in his news conference with Mubarak—to do so would embarrass a crucial ally at a dicey time. The Copts are still too few in America, and have been here too briefly, to be able to lobby for the interests of their helpless brethren against what the men and women of Foggy Bottom naturally advise Warren Christopher and the White House is the national interest. So they, like the Maronites of Lebanon and at the end of the day the Bosnian Moslems, and unlike the Israelis with their still-potent lobby and reputed nuclear stockpile, must be ranked as minor players at best by the practitioners of liberal Realpolitik.

That the revolution is coming with a high degree of probability the two Coptic doctors were agreed. The so-called economy of Egypt is such a black hole and the regime has proved itself so helpless to cope with it, that an Islamic republic, which has never yet been tried in that relatively easygoing, civilized land, seems increasingly worth trying, and not to the masses alone. A state of siege won't help. Worse than impotent, the regime is seen as rotten, inefficient, irresponsible, in a word uncaring. The two jobs that Dr. Youssef believes must be done before Egypt can hope for anything—halving the birthrate and teaching the masses to read and write—are quite beyond this government, as they were beyond those preceding it. And so the country of his birth, his childhood, his young manhood, and his sweetest and bitterest memories, seems destined for a period of misrule by men who consider his people fair game. ❐

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Christopher Caldwell

Universal City

From a cast of twenty-four mayoral aspirants, Los Angeles chose Richard Riordan and Michael Woo, two mellow guys with clashing visions for the capital of the post–melting pot world.

It's hard to conduct a mayoral election while you're waiting for a riot, but that's what Los Angeles residents did in the days leading up to the April 20 primary. Those who expected rioting in the wake of the Rodney King civil rights trial turned out to be wrong, but it was nonetheless fitting that trial season and primary season should have overlapped. The King affair marked the close of an era of biracial politics, whose primary obsessions were—depending on who was in power—white racism and black crime, and whose culmination was a riot in which 3,500 businesses were destroyed and 55 people killed in the name of everyone getting along together. All over L.A., Latin and Asian immigrants and their children were working in occupations that hadn't even existed ten years before. Whites were the second-largest minority in town, and blacks were soon to be the fourth. But eighty-six percent of the votes cast in the primary were cast by blacks or whites, giving these two groups one last chance to create a society in which some degree of fellow-feeling could be fostered.

Los Angeles is the world's first truly universal city. Here it will be determined in the next half-century whether the American democratic capitalism towards which most of the world is moving can be made to work in a polity that is already atomized by ethnicity. Los Angeles is the capital of the post–melting pot world, and April started the season in which Los Angeles would find out whether it had a politics worthy of the role or a leader worthy of the moment.

Three days after the April 17 verdict, Los Angeles residents chose two men—off a confusing roster of twenty-four candidates—to enter the June 8 runoff to replace Tom Bradley. Bradley, the first black mayor of a major American city, had been elected to City Hall during the Nixon administration. L.A. had had only two mayors since the Kennedy administration; and this year's was the first mayoral election without an incumbent since the Hoover administration. The 62-year-old Irish-American venture capitalist Richard Riordan, a Republican who had staged one of the most expensive campaigns—and one of the most spectacular dark-horse rallies—in recent mayoral politics, took 33 percent of the vote; Democratic City Councilman Michael Woo, 41, the first Chinese-American to have won elected office in L.A., took 24 percent to finish second.

Broadly stated, Riordan was running on law-and-order and Woo was running on racial harmony. Despite L.A.'s non-partisan primary system, a legacy of the Progressive era, it looked on the outside like a traditional mayoral race, even a caricature of one—with a conservative Republican tycoon facing off against a Democratic minority professional. Angelenos were certainly being offered two competing

Christopher Caldwell is assistant managing editor of The American Spectator.

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visions of L.A., but they were incomplete ones, as they have to be. Los Angeles politics is terribly skewed: due to age demographics and low rates of naturalization, the groups who have begun to drive the city's economy don't have the vote yet. Whites, with just over a third of the population, cast two thirds of the votes; blacks, with a tenth of the population, cast twice their share. The Latinos, by contrast, claimed 40 percent of the population and just over a tenth of the votes; the Asians were almost as numerous as the blacks, but had only 4 percent of the vote. To make matters worse, Voting Rights suits to increase minority representation had produced rotten boroughs: in this election, 53,018 votes were cast in the Anglo liberal 5th district, 48,023 in the Anglo conservative 12th, and only 10,118 in the Latino 1st. And that is not to mention the weird lacunae—the municipalities like West Hollywood and Beverly Hills and Torrance and Culver City—that are surrounded by Los Angeles, inhabited by its work force, indistinguishable from its culture, and liable to destruction in any riot, but don't vote in the mayoral elections. Woo, the fear was, would have no easier time uniting such a collection of people than Riordan would have policing them.

Riordan's 33 percent left him in a strong position, even in a city that was three-quarters Democratic, and other election results had further tipped the balance in Riordan's favor. Two term-limits initiatives—one of them spearheaded by Richard Riordan and aimed at precisely such career politicians as Michael Woo—passed handily. And Proposition 1, which would have raised $101 million in property taxes to pay for a thousand new policemen—got less than the two-thirds majority necessary to pass.

Los Angeles is notoriously hostile to property-tax hikes. But it also has the smallest police force per capita of any of the nation's largest cities, and everybody wants more cops—the right simply for their own sake, and the left so the LAPD can begin functioning as a police force and not as the commando-squad-cum-star-chamber it became under the leadership of Daryl Gates. Riordan had promised 3,000 more police officers, which he proposed to pay for by leasing Los Angeles International Airport to a private company—probably Lockheed. He opposed Proposition 1 as providing too few police and imposing too high a tax burden (he says he will eventually *lower* taxes). Woo had promised 1,000 more officers—and Proposition 1 was his police plan.

Michael Woo

Woo was caught in a particular quandary, for it was the police issue that had made him a plausible candidate in the first place. Fifty-four percent of those who voted for Woo on April 20 said that his confrontation of Daryl Gates within days of the release of the Rodney King videotape had been a key to their support. And although Zev Yaroslavsky, the fifth-district councilman, had been challenging Gates since the late 1970s, Woo was the first member of the City Council to call for his resignation. At a time when politicians were so invisible as to invite speculation that Gates had gathered enough dirt to blackmail them, Woo's stand was properly seen as courageous.

But Daryl Gates was no longer police chief, and Woo may have gone to the Daryl Gates well one too many times, as Republicans did with Jimmy Carter. His campaign seemed to recognize as much, and ran television ads picturing Woo with the unbelievably popular new police chief Willie Williams—leaving the false impression, Woo opponents claimed, that Woo had Williams's endorsement.

There were some who said that the Williams ad was part of a pattern of truth-shading and unquenchable ambition. According to KCET television commentator Hugh Hewitt: "Woo's a classic Bill Clinton. He's in this mayoral race because it's the next logical step for Mike Woo." Fellow candidate Nick Patsaouras tried again and again to drive home that a "governmental efficiency committee" Woo frequently bragged about establishing had met only a handful of times in its entire existence, to no avail. Woo had received campaign funds from developers who had benefited from Los Angeles's notorious Community Redevelopment Authority, but few seemed to notice. Woo's popularity—and Teflon—may have owed something to the political underrepresentation of his race. He was a truce vote; neither whites nor blacks thought he'd form a coalition that would bludgeon them.

Woo was far ahead of the field in fund-raising until Riordan entered the race, at which point Woo's organization began accusing Riordan of trying to buy the election.

What did worry people was Woo's organization, drawn from the most doctrinaire ranks of the Democratic Party. Worries were that the candidate and his staff were running two different campaigns, along Clinton lines, with the charming and flexible Woo put forward as a beard for the bearers of party orthodoxy. But Woo is a more attractive candidate than even Clinton, not so much a panderer as a policy minimalist. He tries to avoid issue-clutter, so the few issues he does go to the line on—censuring Gates, gay rights, a Council order banning the LAPD from cooperating with Immigration authorities after arrests—resonate as a sort of allegorical ideology: a soft leftism, with an expertise on, and willingness to work with, business.

At least, that was the impression one got from his family background. Woo's father was an officer of Cathay Bank, first of the great Asian-American financial institutions. This lineage not only insulated Woo from accusations that a person who had never had a job in the private sector was the wrong person to lead a city in a financial crisis; it also offered him a powerful financial base. Woo did not have to appeal for Jewish money on the Westside before he went

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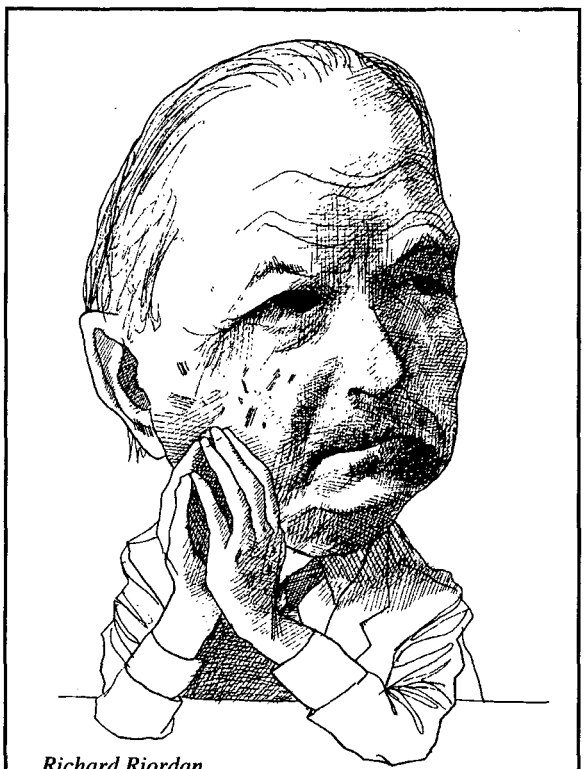
into South-Central to appeal for black votes. Woo was far ahead of the field in fund-raising until Richard Riordan entered the race, at which point Woo's organization began accusing Riordan of trying to buy the election. By then, however, Woo wanted to take the focus *off* Cathay Bank, which—it was revealed in the *Los Angeles Times*—had never made a loan to an African-American, at least not since 1989. Confronted at a debate by the bagperson-cum-gadfly (and mayoral candidate) "Melrose" Larry Green, Woo had to say in exasperation, "Look! My dad is not running for mayor; *I* am."

Richard Riordan

The most interesting financial angle was that Woo was running against his most famous campaign contributor. Richard Riordan, in fact, with his net worth of $100 million, was among the biggest campaign contributors in the history of electoral politics. A Republican, he had nonetheless given over half a million dollars to various Bradley campaigns. His own campaign promised to enforce the existing abortion laws, yet Riordan had given money to Americans United for Life, not to mention heading a group of investors that gave a $400,000 helicopter to Los Angeles's Roger Cardinal Mahony. He had given to George Bush and to Dianne Feinstein. He had given to Jack Kemp and Maxine Waters; to Dana Rohrabacher and Bill Bradley; to Pete Wilson and Ernest Hollings. (The Woo donation was made to a councilmanic campaign through Riordan's law firm.)



Richard Riordan

The obvious parallel was with Ross Perot, and Riordan did little to discourage it. At dead-center of Riordan's campaign was an attempt to use a complex of fears about safety and economic decline to mobilize a liberal electorate, much as—in San Francisco's 1991 mayoral race—former police chief Frank Jordan had harped on homelessness to win the mayoralty of an even more liberal city. So Riordan hired Jordan's consultant, Clint Reilly, who used over $4 million in contributions—$3 million out of Riordan's own pocket—to set up the nuts and bolts of the grassroots campaign, including the hiring of eighty precinct leaders. Reilly set out early to run a campaign rich in symbolism, under the slogan "Riordan: Tough Enough to Turn L.A. around." As Bill Boyarsky summed up Clint Reilly's inspiration in the *Times*: "Los Angeles . . . is going downhill and everyone knows it. Unemployment, crime and other symptoms of urban decay afflict the city. The candidate who defines himself, or herself, as the person with the credentials to handle it wins."

"Los Angeles Dials 911," read the cover of one of his brochures—and Riordan would use the slow response of the LAPD to 911 calls as an issue to both reinforce the symbol and distance himself from his pro-police stance in the months following the Rodney King beating. Riordan put graffiti on a list of seven explanations—including crime, lousy education, and job flight—for why people were leaving L.A. in droves. A poll last winter showed that 3 percent of Angelenos thought graffiti should be the first priority of the new mayor—a higher response than for health care and the environment *combined*. In a platform that had an answer for everything, the fact that Riordan mentioned clean air not at all was a dog that was very loudly not barking. It was easy to *campaign* as a deregulator; one kept one's promises, though, not by removing regulations but by bartering exemptions for political contributions—in effect, living off the City Council's depredations as Chaucer's pardoner lived off canon law. Still, Riordan's evasion on the environment gave hope to capitalists that he would actually *take on* the Air Quality Management Districts and the Workmen's Compensation Act that together were responsible for so much of the business flight from L.A.

The election was ostensibly non-partisan, but Riordan didn't hesitate to identify himself as a Republican. Bush pulled only 62 percent of the votes in Los Angeles last fall, though, so when Riordan was endorsed by Ronald Reagan, Woo began running his own ads to publicize the fact ("He wants to turn L.A. around; I want to move it forward"). Yet much of Riordan's economic policy could be described as Clintonite, or at least Galbraithian. (Riordan prefers to call himself an "Eisenhower Republican.") He takes the but-what-*kind*-of-jobs? cynicism towards the 1980s job growth, noting that 56 percent of the new jobs created in L.A. in 1988 and 1989 had incomes below $16,600 ("a wage that will put thousands of working families at the poverty level," his pamphlet direly warns). Like Woo and fellow candidate Richard Katz, he urged public-private partnerships, touted investment tax credits, and cited the Bible of the Clinton campaign (though certainly not the presidency), Osborne and Gaebler's *Reinventing Government*. And when, during an early-April mayoral forum, Harold Meyerson of the *L.A. Weekly* tried to link him to the Senate filibuster of Clinton's stimulus package, Riordan reminded him that the election was non-partisan,

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as was his support. (Riordan's campaign manager, campaign director, press secretary, and field director are all veterans of the Clinton campaign.) Furthermore, Riordan said, he was backing the president on this one.

At the same forum, Riordan was stung by questions on some of his leveraged buyouts, particularly from Dennis Schatzman of the black *Los Angeles Sentinel*, who mentioned that after the Boys supermarkets buyout, food prices went up in South-Central. Katz added that the Mattel buyout, Riordan's most famous, had actually sent jobs to Mexico. "That was before I was involved with Mattel," Riordan said. But Katz stuck to his guns, and Riordan was finally left to say, "That's simply not true." Katz repeated that it was. (And Katz was right, as Riordan's campaign manager admitted two days later.) Harold Meyerson then said, "You were, were you not, part of the 1980s mania that lost a lot of jobs?" Riordan was visibly rattled at the end of the debate. There was a case to be made that his LBOs had created jobs, but he was already politician enough not to make it.

The following day, a hundred or so of his volunteers gathered in Westwood Park underneath the San Diego Freeway, ready to begin the afternoon's precinct walking, and Riordan was in his element. After a lunch of tacos provided by a local chain, Riordan walked over to a picnic table under a tree to address the faithful. Barely had he begun when a lanky fellow in tennis clothes and sunglasses yelled, "We love you, Dick! Don't let anyone make you defensive about your money!"

"I agree!" Riordan said. "What do you want? Someone to run this city who's a failure?"

Katz and the End of Clintonism

If Riordan was camouflaging his conservatism, it's not clear that he had to, for consensus liberalism faced roadblocks most visible in the candidacy of Richard Katz, who finished a distant fourth. "Keep an eye on Katz," people warned until the final days—and it's symptomatic that the closer one got to the Democratic political establishment, the more fervent the Katz boomlet became.

Katz's campaign was almost perfect in every way except that no one wanted to vote for him. A six-term state assemblyman, he was Assembly Speaker Willie Brown's personal footsoldier in the race, with all the funding potential that implies. He was the largest single recipient of lobbyists' funds. He had hired James Carville as his senior adviser at the time of Carville's triumph on the Harris Wofford campaign. And he was a "new" liberal, i.e., a big spender who sought to appeal to Joe Sixpack by ardently championing the electric chair—symbolically, of course, for the mayor of Los Angeles has no say over criminal sentencing. He even ran a commercial on MTV.

Katz had some problems, including the soporific oratorical style of a five-minute PBS funding pitch, but he was a nice, well-educated suburbanite with nuanced political views. The *L.A. Weekly* compared Katz to former State Assembly speaker Jesse Unruh, who had been drubbed trying to run down the middle in a highly polarized 1973 election between Bradley and mayoral incumbent Sam Yorty. And indeed, he did fight over a center bloc with Councilman Joel Wachs that accounted for about 17 percent of the votes. But in a successional war between eleven different political tendencies and four different highly diverse ethnic voting blocs, there was no real center, only a gauntlet one could run through mumbling, "Me too, but less." Katz could conceivably have been a tough runoff opponent for either Riordan or Woo, but the political climate that he spent much of his early career trying to create did him in.

"The difference between the old L.A. politicians like Kenny Hahn and the new L.A. politicians like Ruth Galanter is the old politicians wanted to be remembered for what they built, and the new ones want to be remembered for what they stopped *from being built."*

All his purported strengths turned around and bit him. Willie Brown has picked up enemies *pari passu* as he's picked up power, and much of the money Katz got from Brown's machine was blown on a huge advertising buy that aired while people were out shopping for canned goods and Glock 9s before the Rodney King verdict. The Woo campaign seized on Katz's contributions from lobbies as unseemly in one who presumed to run against the City Hall establishment. And Katz's prescient choice of Carville even before he had become famous led to Midas-like misfortunes. So busy was Carville—with the Florio campaign in New Jersey and his attempted rescue of the Clinton presidency—that he was able to show up in California for only one $150-a-plate breakfast, which he spent discussing Hollywood and Georgia's Zell Miller. ("I've helped out there," Carville said when called for this article, "but I'm not sufficiently up to speed to give an in-depth interview.") And when Katz sought to publicize his tough-on-crime stance he did so with an ad in which he appeared wearing a Fonz-type leather jacket while sirens blared in the background. Katz in a leather jacket called up memories of Michael Dukakis in a tank.

Houston and the End of the Great Society

Katz's mantra, repeated at every forum—"You can't change government until you change the people who run it"—worked against him. Despite his best efforts, voters saw him as locked into politics-as-usual, which even liberals admitted was overextended and out of money. One Democrat, though, tried to make a sharp break with that politics, albeit in a predictable way. The first candidate onto TV with his

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ads was Tom Houston, a man with impeccable liberal credentials, including long service in the Jerry Brown machine and a stint at City Hall as Tom Bradley's deputy mayor. A short, cocky Princeton grad fond of disco dancing, Houston decided to make undocumented immigrants his big issue, and hit the airwaves with a series of spots speaking to what he saw as the problem of gangs and illegal street vendors—whom he tended to mention in the same breath.

The first thing Houston would tell reporters visiting his twenty-fifth-floor office in the Bank of America tower was that he was not a racist or a right-wing ideologue. Further, he wasn't against all immigrants. "The illegal ones," Houston said, "I don't think their sole reason is coming for a job; I think it's coming for freebies, to immediately go on benefits. Four hundred dollars is big money to them. It's a big incentive to come across and get $5,000 a year."

You don't say! But Houston would not hear of cutting those benefits, or of reforming government. Houston showed every sign of wanting to play the entitlement game; his mayoral platform called for the appointment of three deputy mayors by race: one Asian, one black, and one Latino. Far from being a right-wing ideologue, he was using immigration for Great Society ends. His invocation of the Brown Peril was a call to Washington to send yet more money. He was absolutely right, of course, that, after denouncing him as a racist, the *L.A. Times* and other candidates picked up on his theme that Los Angeles had the right to ask the federal government for a bailout. But why were government programs the only untouchables in this immigrant equation? Why not rewrite the environmental regulations he was getting rich on as a lawyer? Why not raise property taxes in the Hollywood Hills, where he lived? Houston bombed not because immigration was not a legitimate political issue but because he was trying to make himself mayor off of the havoc wrought by the social programs he was still defending.

Michael Woo

The "Future-of-L.A." Candidates

Throughout the election, three candidates were singled out as symbolizing the politics of L.A.'s future: Stan Sanders and the two *griegos*. Sanders was a Rhodes scholar who returned from Oxford to attend Yale Law School and has a daughter named Chelsea. He was an All-American football player at Whittier College and was drafted by the Chicago Bears. As a black from Watts who had compiled a résumé to rival Bill Clinton's and Richard Nixon's *combined*, Sanders was the only candidate who could vie with Riordan for the title of most impressive private citizen, but he too had made his mark as wheel-greaser par excellence—and his close ties to the entire ruling directorate of Los Angeles made his attempts to run against "downtown" as ludicrous as Katz's attempts to run against City Hall.

But Sanders's *critique* of downtown—by which he meant big business—was right on target. Big business was negotiating a separate peace in the tax war that government was waging on the economy, and was offering up very few jobs in return. While not wanting to penalize big business, Sanders pounded home in speech after speech that small businesses were creating 80 or 85 percent of L.A.'s new jobs. And he took the most innovative approach to the tax code, proposing a 25¢ levy on video games to pay for school libraries. But in his attempts to make the tax code sit, heel, and roll over, Sanders never considered reducing the tax burden overall. Despite its embrace by elements of the Clinton administration, Sanders considered any cuts in the capital gains tax a "Republican conservative nostrum."

What Sanders favored was enterprise zones based first on investment tax credits, but to a lesser degree on what he called employment credits: "Tax breaks based on the number of employees hired, so we give breaks to labor-intensive businesses," he said. "I don't think there'd be a lot of point to having enterprise zones in the central city and have them be capital-intensive." It's an idea of the left, but it's a sophisticated one that addresses a potentially disastrous consequence of Kemp-style enterprise zones: their proven tendency to suck viable cutting-edge businesses out of border areas and into the inner city, where they fail. Sanders *was* a possible mayor of the future, but only to those who had already decided that the future would be social-democratic industrial policy.

The same could be said of Nick Patsaouras, a Greek immigrant engineer who billed himself as the "Man with the Plan" in his campaign ads. The plan—or *Plan*—involved "leveraging" $180 billion in federal transportation funds earmarked for Los Angeles over the next thirty years, mostly through "mixed-use" industrial spaces. Patsaouras rejected tax cuts out of hand. "Forget it, forget it—let's be basic. You're an investor. Are you going to South-Central if you're not a benevolent person? Would you invest because you're going to be given a tax break? No, no, no. That's nonsense."

Of the plan itself, Patsaouras said: "Let the developer do what he knows. Pay him a third for his expertise, and let the community own a part of it. . . . We give the developer

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incentives, rather than subsidies. I want to let the developer do his thing without interference from the government. . . . We provide equity, he provides the expertise—free market." *Free market?* The government provides the equity and a developer keeps a third of the money? Clearly a developer's idea of the free market.

But Patsaouras developed the most eclectic intellectual base of any candidate, from paleocon County Supervisor Mike Antonovich to Marxist urban theorist Mike Davis. Even KCET's Hugh Hewitt was high on Patsaouras: "He *builds* things. I love that," Hewitt said. "The difference between the old L.A. politicians like [County Supervisor] Kenny Hahn and the new L.A. politicians like [Councilwoman] Ruth Galanter is the old politicians wanted to be remembered for what they built, and the new ones want to be remembered for what they *stopped* from being built. You ask them what their greatest achievements are, and they say, 'I sued the marina developers. I blocked the freeway.'"

Patsaouras flagged in the polls, though, as Linda Griego rose. The former deputy mayor was the only woman and the only serious Hispanic candidate in the race, and she was in it only because L.A. County supervisor Gloria Molina, the juggernaut of the Latina/feminist center-left, stayed out. Griego went nowhere until Emily's List and other groups forked up half a million dollars—which Griego spent on a series of dazzling feminist TV ads, the first of which featured Griego walking through black-and-white cardboard cutouts of her male opponents in a bright red dress. The spot drove her into third place by the final week of the election, and won her the right to debate Woo and Riordan on election eve. With Emily's money in hand, Griego began to play the Riordan/Katz symbols game with live ammunition, specifically, an AK-47 bullet, which she pulled out to introduce her plan to ban—not guns, which would be unconstitutional—but bullets.

Her only other issue was choice on abortion, and the ads she aired worked only to the extent that they alienated her from the bloc she claimed to represent. Mexicans are among the most conservative constituencies in the country on abortion rights—to say nothing of women in the workplace or law-and-order—yet Mexican politicians, stranded in their gerrymandered slum districts, are generally so strapped for cash that they have to go begging for it from pro-choice groups.[1]

Wachs and White Fragmentation

Joel Wachs, a Valley councilman who had been a Republican until the Bush presidency, was fond of pointing out during the campaign that, while L.A.'s bus riders were subsidized by $1.17 per ride, Metrolink commuters arriving from the suburbs were subsidized $22.50 a ride. It was clear in this election that the 1980s had turned whites—even under their rhetorical disguise as "commuters"—into a minority bloc, fighting for their own subsidies and perks and set-asides. Wachs took heat, though, on his own subsidies for the arts, on the same grounds. Wachs was godfather to the Los Angeles Endowment for the Arts, whose $5-million budget Richard Katz proposed spending on police. It was getting harder to justify asking the Koreans and Latinos burned out of years of labor by the 1992 riots to subsidize theater and sculpture for the largely white "arts community."[2]

When Wachs went after Riordan in earnest, he sent out three different mailers—one accusing him of being too tied in to City Hall, one attacking him as too conservative, and one attacking him as too *liberal*. He then sent out his "Jewish mailer," signed by Wachs's mother, which told voters: "I want you to think about our shared heritage. . . . Mayor Joel Wachs is good for the Jews. It's good for everyone in Los Angeles." Foes of Wachs accused him of "divisiveness," but his chief campaign consultant Harvey Englander was proud of the mailer. "Every candidate in this race has been appealing to either ethnic or religious groups," Englander said, "very blatantly in fact. And when we saw Mike Woo go into an Asian—a Korean—group and explain why it was good for Asians to elect an Asian mayor, it validated our plan to go to the Jewish community and remind them about Joel's leadership . . . Dick Riordan I'm sure has done it with Catholic voters."

"In all sixty-four pages of your booklet," a Mexican-American journalist said to Riordan on TV one night, "you never mention diversity," and once again Riordan fumbled for an answer.

The Anglo Candidate?

That was stretching it, but there was no question that the perception—and reality—that Riordan's support was 90 percent Anglo was hurting him. In a largely white city, such numbers can be a sign that a candidate is refusing to practice special-interest politics. But in Los Angeles, this uniracial support would threaten the Riordan coalition with a dead end.

"In all sixty-four pages of your booklet," a Mexican-American journalist said to Riordan on TV one night, "you never mention diversity," and once again Riordan fumbled

(continued on page 70)

[1] For a comprehensive treatment of disempowerment in the "new American political system," see Peter Skerry's new book *Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority* (The Free Press, 400 pages, $27.95).

[2] It was the "arts community," though, that allowed Wachs to forge the greatest fundraising innovation in recent years. Upheld in court as legal under ethics laws during the final days of the campaign, the scheme allowed thousand-dollar donors to receive signed limited-edition prints and lithographs from some of Wachs's better known associates, including David Hockney.

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Clinton's Expats

by Stuart Reid

London

There is nothing the English like more than to beat the Americans at their own game, especially now that we can't beat anyone at our own game, cricket. You (and I) may not be greatly excited by Emma Thompson and her little red ribbon and her excursions into the higher banality ("You know, when you read Jane Austen, you don't actually naturally think of the slave colonies of the West Indies—but you should . . ."). Still, you can't argue with an Oscar, and Emma's triumph in Tinseltown was greeted here as just about our greatest achievement since Tom Jones made his first live appearance at Caesar's Palace in 1969.

It's not just our movie stars. Last year London was gloating over the success of the "Britpack." The Britpack consists of those Brits who have landed on your teeming shore over the past ten years and now occupy positions of power and influence in journalism and publishing. Their presence has aroused resentment, we read, though it seems to be stronger in New York than in Peoria. Only the other day, at a seminar at Columbia University, Suzanne Braun Levine, editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, raised the possibility that there was more than "class, style and elegance" to British journalism; that there might also be an element of trash, scandal, glitz, and gossip to it.

That seems a bit hard on John O'Sullivan, British editor of *National Review*, and on Andrew Sullivan, British editor of the *New Republic*, and on Alexander Chancellor, British editor of the *New Yorker*'s Talk of the Town, and on Christopher Hitchens, British star of the *Nation* and *Vanity Fair*. To be sure, all four men, being civilized, like a bit of gossip; but none of them can be accused of peddling trash, scandal, or glitz. Tina Brown, British editor of the *New Yorker*, and Anna "Nuclear" Wintour, British editor of American *Vogue*, may yield occasionally to glitz, but hardly to trash.

What's more, traffic across the Atlantic goes both ways, as the saying has it. There are roughly 150,000 men and women of American birth living here, among them the usual suspects: drug dealers, rock singers, New Agers, Klansmen, failed disc-jockeys, failed spies, and academics. Plus some jolly decent types. But some American expats see themselves as refugees from a base and unjust society and have a cloying reverence for what they see as English values, i.e., for the Welfare State and (though they are invariably liberal) for the class system. They are often as much ex-patriots as expatriates, but, almost in spite of themselves, they remain incorrigibly, even obsessively, American.

In the mid-sixties, a lot of Americans came over to help us riot outside the U.S. Embassy and frighten the police horses. That Bill Clinton was among the temporary expats is well known. What is less well known is that among Clinton's close friends at Oxford was a fellow American, Mandy Merck, who became an archetypal professional expat and a minor success in such journals as the *New Statesman* and *Marxism Today*. Theirs was not a sexual relationship. As Ms. Merck said last year: "Bill was the first boy I ever 'came out' to. In fact, he was just about the first person outside my circle I ever felt I could tell I was a lesbian." One wonders what Clinton might have done to persuade Ms. Merck to come out.

Whatever, Ms. Merck was not a woman to mess with. She proved her toughness when she joined the radical events magazine *Time Out* in the seventies and, as "Mother of the Chapel," helped organize a series of strikes that ended in 1981 when the entire staff was sacked. With the help of a loan of £80,000 from the Greater London Council, then run by "Red" Ken Livingstone, the ex-staffers started a rival (and even more radical) events magazine, *City Limits*, which earlier this year went into liquidation. A key element of the final dispute at *Time Out* was that management

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wanted to pay some staff more than others, on the old-fashioned principle that some staff are worth more than others, while Merck & Co. insisted that all staff should be paid the same wage. Tony Elliott, who owns *Time Out*, now talks of "bloody Mandy Merck." She was, he says, "undisputably the prime mover in all our troubles, a classic case of a dilettante radical—bright and manipulative." Remind you of anyone?

More recently, Ms. Merck has produced gay and lesbian programs for both the BBC and Channel Four. In February, the feminist publishing house Virago put out a collection of Ms. Merck's essays under the promising title, *Perversions: Deviant Readings*. Pity the kids at Cornell, where Ms. Merck is now a visiting professor in feminist ontology, or some such.

At first sight, Larry Adler would seem to have little in common with Ms. Merck. He is 79, plays the harmonica, and is straight. However, his politics were once every bit as radical as hers. Adler, from Baltimore, is a household name in Britain, loved and reviled in equal measure. He settled in Blighty in 1949, after fleeing Truman's anti-Communist terror. He had been a minor Hollywood figure and had been blacklisted. He has been dining out on his victim status for forty years.

The proximate cause of Adler's flight was a court case (not his last). In 1948 he and his partner, the dancer Paul Draper, both of whom had supported Henry Wallace, were denounced as pro-Communists in a letter to the *Greenwich* (Conn.) *Times* by one Hester McCullough. Since in those happy and enlightened times it was not *de rigueur* for entertainers to be pro-Communist, Adler and Draper sued Mrs. McCullough, swearing in a preliminary affidavit that they were not, and never had been, Communists. The result of the action was a hung jury: eight to four in Mrs. McCullough's favor.

The case came to the attention of William F. Buckley, Jr., at that time applying his mind to God, Man, and Yale. The law firm retained by Adler and Draper was Wiggin and Dana, of New Hampshire, which also represented Yale. Buckley wrote in the university paper that a lawyer who would defend Adler and Draper wasn't fit to represent Yale. In his memoirs (published in London in 1984), Adler writes: "I've never met Mr. Buckley who, unusual for a right-winger, has wit, but I'd love to know if he still stands by his anti-Voltaire opinion."

In fact, Voltaire would probably have stood by Buckley. Voltaire may have had his faults, but he was not stupid. Adler writes in his memoirs:

> A large, too large, part of my life revolves around the question: Was I or was I not a Communist? In the days when there was a penalty if you were, I wouldn't answer the question. I had friends, I still have friends, who were or are Communists. It is their right and I would do nothing to damage that right.
>
> I was never attracted to the Communist Party. Often I agreed with them, often I worked with them, often I found that the Communists were the only ones saying anything worth saying. As a group, they were by far the most intelligent people in Hollywood. They were sometimes the most highly principled.

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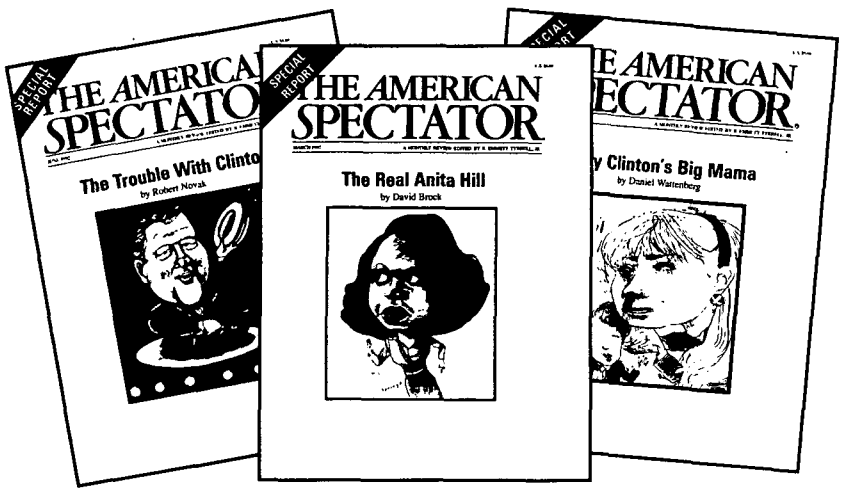

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So why was he not attracted to the Communist Party, given that he often worked with its members (at the height of Stalin's power) and found them intelligent and principled?

In England, Adler cultivated the great and the good and the titled. He had pieces written for him by Vaughan Williams, Malcolm Arnold, and Arthur Benjamin. He is a truly gifted musician. He composed the score for the 1954 hit movie *Genevieve*. His name was taken off the credits when it was released in America, an injustice that understandably still rankles, especially since the score was nominated for an Oscar. (Just because a chap was blacklisted doesn't mean he never suffered an injustice.)

Adler dropped names, drops names. For years he's been bragging about the time Charlie Chaplin asked him to make up a foursome at tennis with Greta Garbo and Salvador Dali. He is, he lets it be known, on good terms with Prince Philip, though apparently not with the Queen. He likes to boast that some years ago he presented the Queen Mother with a mouth organ and she said: "Nobody will believe me when I tell them I have held Larry Adler's organ." Ho, ho, ho.

Larry Adler is not the best-known American living here. That accolade must go to Ruby Wax, a street-smart, thrice-married 40-year-old television comedian from Chicago. How come she is so big here? The critic Mark Lawson has part of the answer: "She is a caricature American—pushy, brash, shouting in the shops, wearing very loud outfits. She reassures British people about how awful they think Americans are." Then again, she's funny, after a fashion, a Roseanne Barr with nice legs and a pert, chipmunk face. She has two children, Madeleine and Max. Thus Mad Wax and Max Wax. On reflection, maybe that's not funny.

Ruby Wax arrived here in 1972 when she was 19, and signed up with the Glasgow School of Music and Drama, where she worked tirelessly and unavailingly on her vowels. "I never stopped working so that I would never have to go home again," she told Lynn Barber of the *Independent on Sunday*. Later she joined the Royal Shakespeare Company. She did not shine as a classical actress—though she made a convincing wench, and still does—but discovered a talent for comedy. She started as a writer, and in the mid-eighties was given her own show. Her trick is to interview and mock other show-biz stars and accost strangers in the street and ridicule them. She clearly thinks that, by American standards, this is both original and daring. In Britain, she says, "an eccentric is prized; in America, she is ridiculed."

Mind you, she is happy to risk ridicule. In April she was in Los Angeles, working on an HBO special. The United States may not be her cup of tea, but that is where she craves success. Trouble is, America is so unappreciative. "It's rich on the outside," as Ruby puts it, "but they're corpses on the inside."

Obviously the girl's homesick. "My favorite workplace," she says, "is the lobby of the Hilton Hotel, which smells like America and has terrific club sandwiches." Not that she'd want to live in the United States, you understand. What she wants is revenge. "The dream," she told Lynn Barber, "is to take the one-woman show to America and invite all those bitches to sit in the front row and then bring out the machine-guns—you know, the girls with the million-dollar skin and flat stomachs and the men."

Loyd [sic] Grossman is not homesick. He is a restaurant critic and host of a TV program called "Masterchef," and could pass for an Englishman—in Jersey City. He has worked hard on his accent since arriving here from Massachusetts in 1972, with the result, as a wag noted recently, that he now suffers from irritable vowel syndrome. He has the manner, bearing, and delivery of Prince Charles as played by Woody Allen.

Grossman likes to mock others for their lack of taste. Before he went into food TV, he had a series called "Through the Keyhole," in which he took viewers on bitchy (and often quite entertaining) tours of famous people's homes. "It would be impossible to do 'Through the Keyhole' in America," he says. "Americans are so terribly insecure . . ." Now you understand why Robin Leach has made his career in American television. ❐

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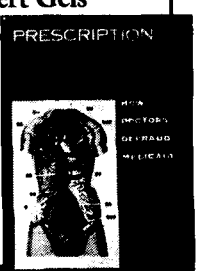

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The Topic of Cancer

Sierra Magazine vs. Bruce Ames

Bruce N. Ames, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of California, Berkeley, is a world-famous authority on cancer and carcinogens. In the fall of 1991, he was asked by Sierra, *a publication of the Sierra Club, to contribute to a special, centennial issue devoted to the theme "If I Ruled the World." Ames wrote the piece, but* Sierra *chose not to run it. Here we reprint Ames's contribution, along with the letters of invitation and rejection from* Sierra*'s editor-in-chief, Jonathan F. King. These documents first appeared in the autumn/winter 1992 issue of the Paris-based quarterly* Projections, *which noted, "In our opinion, the point of view of such an authority as Bruce N. Ames deserves to be known even if it is nonconformist and attacks preconceived ideas." —Ed.*

Letter of Invitation

November 14, 1991

Bruce Ames
Berkeley, CA 94709

Dear Professor Ames,

Next year marks the Sierra Club's 100th anniversary. In May 1992, *Sierra*, the Club's national magazine, will publish a special Centennial issue that celebrates the past, surveys the present, and takes bets on the future. I am writing to ask if you would like to be part of that effort.

We plan to present the thoughts of a wide range of individuals whose knowledge, experience, and creativity qualify them to answer the following question: Given that our planet faces a future that appears bleak if not terrifying, what steps would you take to ensure our survival for the next 100 years?

Consider this an opportunity to play "If I Ruled the World," an imaginative exercise whose goal is to achieve environmental serenity and security. You may assume that you have the ability to direct the course of governments and institutions, and that you have the wealth, brains, and political support of the world's citizens at your disposal.

As well as offering your general scenario for the future, please be as specific as possible: name those whom you would empower, and those whom you would have pay penance. Regulate industries, or set them free; draw geographical boundaries, or erase them; impose democracy on dictatorships, or vice versa; develop and distribute resources, or conserve them; plan our menus, our reading lists, and our births. Should you hold that our survival depends on successfully addressing just one or two key issues, feel free to offer your solutions in that light.

If this exercise is something that appeals to you, and you'd like to take it on, we'll need your thoughts by January 1, 1992. Responses can be as long as 1,000 words—though we recognize that some very sensible prescriptions could be offered in as few as 100. Please include the biographical information you'd like to accompany your contribution.

On behalf of our 600,000 readers across the United States and Canada, I hope we'll be able to include your vision in our Centennial issue. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jonathan F. King
Editor-in-Chief

The Article: "Science and the Environment"

It is popular these days to espouse an apocalyptic vision of the future of our planet. Pollution is being blamed for global warming and ozone depletion, pesticides for cancer. Yet these and many other environmental causes are based on weak or bad science. The reality is that the future of the planet has never been brighter. With the bankruptcy of Communism, the world is hopefully on the path to democracy, free markets, and greater prosperity. Science and technology develop in a free society, and free markets bring wealth, which is associated with both better health and lower birth rates. Scientific advances and free markets can also lead to technologies that minimize pollution for the lowest cost. A market for pollution rights is desirable—polluting shouldn't be free—and is much more effective than a bureaucratic monopoly. In my scenario for the future, I would like to see environmentalism based on scientific fact, directed at solving real problems rather than phantoms.

An example of this problem is the public misconception that pollution is a significant contributor to cancer and that cancer rates are soaring. As life expectancy continues to increase in industrialized countries, cancer rates (unadjusted for age) also increase; however, the age-adjusted cancer death rate in the United States for all cancers combined (excluding lung cancer from smoking) has been staying steady or decreasing since 1950. Decreasing since 1950 are, primarily stomach, cervical, uterine, and rectal cancers. Increasing are primarily lung cancer (which is due to smoking, as are 30 percent of all U.S. cancer deaths), melanoma (possibly due to sunburns), and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Cancer is fundamentally a degenerative disease of old age, although external factors can increase cancer rates (cigarette smoking in humans) or decrease them (eating more fruits and vegetables).

A second misconception is that high-dose animal cancer tests tell us the sig-

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nificant cancer risks for humans. Approximately half of all chemicals—whether natural or synthetic—that have been tested in standard animal cancer tests have turned out to be carcinogenic. These standard tests of chemicals are conducted chronically, at near-toxic doses—the maximum tolerated dose—and evidence is accumulating that it may be the high dose itself, rather than the chemical *per se*, that is the risk factor for cancer. (This is because high doses can cause chronic wounding of tissues or other effects that lead to chronic cell division, which is a major risk factor for cancer.) At the very low levels of chemicals to which humans are exposed through water pollution or synthetic pesticide residues, such increased cell division does not occur. Thus, they are likely to pose no or minimal cancer risks.

The third misconception is that human exposures to carcinogens and other toxins are nearly all to synthetic chemicals. On the contrary, the amount of synthetic pesticide residues in plant foods are insignificant compared to the amount of natural pesticides produced by plants themselves. Of all dietary pesticides, 99.99 percent are natural: they are toxins produced by plants to defend themselves against fungi and animal predators. Because each plant produces a different array of toxins, we estimate that on average Americans ingest roughly 5,000 to 10,000 different natural pesticides and their breakdown products. Americans eat an estimated 1,500 mg of natural pesticides per person per day, which is about 10,000 times more than they consume of synthetic pesticide residues. By contrast, the FDA found that residues of 200 synthetic chemicals, including the synthetic pesticides thought to be of greatest importance, average only about 0.09 mg per person per day.

The fourth misconception is that synthetic toxins pose greater carcinogenic hazards than natural toxins. On the contrary, the proportion of natural chemicals that is carcinogenic when tested in both rats and mice is the same as for synthetic chemicals—roughly half. All chemicals are toxic at some dose, and 99.99 percent of the chemicals we ingest are natural.

The fifth misconception is that the toxicology of manmade chemicals is different from that of natural chemicals. Humans have many general, natural defenses that make us well buffered against normal exposures to toxins, both natural and synthetic. DDT is often viewed as the typically dangerous synthetic pesticide. However, it saved millions of lives in the tropics and made obsolete the pesticide lead arsenate, which is even more persistent and toxic, although all-natural. While DDT was unusual with respect to bioconcentration, natural pesticides also bioconcentrate if they are fat-soluble. Potatoes, for example, naturally contain fat-soluble neurotoxins detectable in the bloodstream of all potato eaters. High levels of these neurotoxins have been shown to cause birth defects in rodents.

The sixth misconception is that correlation implies causation. The number of storks in Germany has been decreasing for decades. At the same time, the German birth rate also has been decreasing. Solid evidence that storks bring babies! Cancer clusters in small areas are expected to occur by chance alone, and there is no persuasive evidence from either epidemiology or toxicology that pollution is a significant cause of cancer for the general population.

There are tradeoffs involved in eliminating pesticides. Plants need chemical defenses—either natural or synthetic—in order to survive pest attack. One consequence of disproportionate concern about synthetic pesticide residues is that some plant breeders are currently developing plants to be more insect-resistant and inadvertently are selecting plants higher in natural toxins. A major grower recently introduced a new variety of highly insect-resistant celery into commerce. The pest-resistant celery contains 6,200 parts per billion (ppb) of carcinogenic (and mutagenic) psoralens instead of the 800 ppb normally present in celery. The celery is still on the market.

Synthetic pesticides have markedly lowered the cost of plant foods, thus making them more available to consumers. Eating more fruits and vegetables is thought to be the best way to lower risks of cancer and heart disease other than giving up smoking; our vitamins, antioxidants, and fiber come from plants and are important anticarcinogens. Thus, eliminating essential pesticides is likely to increase cancer rates. Huge expenditure of money and effort on tiny hypothetical risks does not improve public health. Rather, it diverts our resources from real human health hazards, and it hurts the economy. —*Bruce N. Ames*

Letter of Rejection

March 27, 1992

Dr. Bruce N. Ames
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

Dear Dr. Ames,

I fear that you have yet to receive a response from us to your inquiry about the status of the essay you sent us in response to our invitation to contribute to our May/June feature, "If I Ruled the World." If that is so, I apologize; we have just sent that issue to press, and are now catching up with much postponed correspondence and other work.

Your essay was not among those we chose to include, though we passed no judgment on its contents in making that decision. By that I mean, our concurrence with an author's ideas was not a prerequisite to publication; there was no "litmus test" of ideological purity to be passed. Our problem with your piece was more stylistic: We found the focus on pollution and pesticides far narrower than the sweeping prescriptions other contributors were making, such that it seemed at times as though the question ("How would you solve the environmental crisis if you ruled the world?") was in danger of being forgotten by the reader. In some cases we solved problems of focus by editing a contribution down, but in your case that clearly could not be done without doing damage to the arguments themselves. Space being at a premium—we received more contributions than we could possibly run, even when some were edited down—there was no question of running the piece uncut, at least in this format.

Since we have long found your thinking provocative—it challenges some basic presuppositions of the environmental movement—we hope to be able to share your ideas with our readers in the future. But it simply wasn't feasible within the context we set for this special issue, and I wanted to be sure you understood the rationale behind our decision not to publish "Science and the Environment" at this time.

Sincerely,

Jonathan F. King
Editor-in-Chief

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Studious City

by Benjamin J. Stein

Sunday in Braino-Land

It's Brunch Time at the Cosmos Club at the Corner of Florida Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, D.C. This club is in a huge, ancient mansion that once belonged to someone rich and public-spirited named Sumner Welles, as I recall. It's populated mainly by mature, let's say, brainos and their spouses and children. Lots of Nobel Prize-winners. Lots of Pulitzer Prize-winners. Dozens. The members here are rarely rich, as far as I can tell, but they are accomplished. I used to see Judge Bazelon here. Also Dr. Sabin. Now they're both in eternity.

I'm here with the winner of the Wells Prize at Williams College, 1935, and the valedictorian of her class at Monticello High School just before the New Deal. Mom and Pop. They love the Cosmos Club. They inhale it. They live for it. They're totally crazy about it. The reading club. The computer club. Everything. It has only one young member, Bob Tyrrell, and he's not here this morning.

"May I ask a question?" I asked my father as he ate with startling restraint. "Why is it so damned important to lower the deficit? Won't the people who get paid the money by the government just save it anyway?"

My father looked as if the key light at The Tropicana Main Room had hit him. He was ready. On stage in an instant, sounding just like me imitating him in Hollywood. "There are some economists who say so," he said. "That's the rational-expectations school. That as the deficit grows, Americans will save more because they know they'll have to pay it off. It's pretty clear that Americans just aren't that prudent."

"Well, even so," I said. "How much difference does it make if the deficit is fifty or sixty billion more or less? How much can it really mean spread over a country this size?"

This one really hit the jackpot. My father nodded excitedly. "Well, that's right," he said. "Exactly right. Ed Dennison [a braino of legendary proportions, who recently went to Economists' Valhalla] said that if we reduce the deficit by one percent of GNP, that will increase growth by one-tenth of one percent. That means GNP will double in twenty-four years instead of twenty-five years if you're moving from 2.9 percent to three percent. Big deal."

"Yeah," I said.

My mother, the ace of making faces on this earth, made a series of mock quizzical expressions, twisting her brow and looking thoughtful.

"Anyway," my father said, "are these little differences in economic well-being that important? Are people better off if they have one more CD player? Wouldn't they be better off if they spent more time with their families, or more time praying, as you would say? I wonder if we're really any happier now than we were in 1961 when per capita GNP was half of what it is now."

"Yeah," I said again. "Democrats. Materialists. We need people who have some spiritual values at the helm, not politicians pretending to be economists."

"Maybe we're not the right people to even talk about that, though," my father said. "After all, we're fairly comfortable, and maybe having a new CD would make a huge difference to a poor person."

After dinner, we drove out to Silver Spring and inspected all our old haunts. Time. That's the enemy. Not economics.

Monday

A stroll from my wonderful hotel, The River Inn, a few blocks over to the student center at George Washington University. The Marvin Center. Years ago, my wife and I used to have wine coolers there with our best friend, Arthur Best. It had a certain refined gentility, and I really liked it. Cheap and classy. That's the ticket. Usually I have expensive and trashy. "FLASH CASH AND TRASH" is the invisible neon sign hanging over all too much of my life.

Benjamin J. Stein is a writer, lawyer, economist, and actor living in Malibu, California.

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The Marvin Center has changed. On the corner, there is a man begging. In front of the Tower Records across from the Marvin Center, there are two people begging. In the walkway to the Marvin Center itself, on university property, there are two more men begging. They don't look infirm at all. They look like they just decided to beg instead of work. I don't like this.

In the men's room of the fifth floor, two black kids are very impressively working out their rap routine, which they're about to do on stage at the student tavern. It gives me an idea for a Medical Care Rap:

Yo, Hillary, upscale Wellesley yuppie dame,
What makes you think you know the game
Of fixing up our medical costs, and telling sawbones what work to do,
And how much to charge to me and you,
When even doctors and professors and such,
'Bout that there subject don't know too much.
Yo, Hillary, Illinois woman of pride,
Don't practice on my doctor's hide.
I like my medical care and I pay it myself,
Keep your paws off my life-and-death shelf.
If it ain't welfare money that' payin' the bills,
What right you got to even talk about my doctor and my ills?
Before you start trashin' doctors and nurses,
Think about socialized medicine's curses,
And take your big brain—you cagey fox,
And work on something closer to Chelsea and Socks.

As I walked back to the River Inn, past Munson Hall, where I used to live so many years and tears ago, across from George Washington University Hospital, I wondered how long it would be until I was unable to walk anywhere in Foggy Bottom because of the panhandlers. How long before cities are simply abandoned by middle-class people?

Tuesday

Back to glorious Los Angeles, a.k.a. Wacko City. (Speaking of which, how come David Koresh can have twenty wives and innumerable women who are insanely in love with him and every woman I know only wants to tell me her problems and then usually borrow money?)

On the plane, I sat next to an interesting, intense man from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. He told me all about black holes. "If the earth ever came near a black hole," he said, "it would be crushed down to something like the size of an egg, but still weighing as much as the earth. That's the power of a black hole." (Yes, but have you ever seen how much my MasterCard bill weighs? Yet, it's as thin as a sheet of paper.)

The man also told me about Voyager and Pioneer, still sending back data from far out past our solar system. "I don't want to frighten you," he said, "but one of the observations is that there's probably a black hole not too far from the edge of our galaxy. If we get sucked into it, that's the end." →

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Yes, I thought. But also the end of the lease payments on my BMW that I don't even drive any longer because the back seat is too uncomfortable for Trixie.

I got up to walk around the plane. At the very back of coach, I met a lovely stewardess who whispered "Bueller, Bueller" to me. Several of her cohorts joined in. I sat and talked to them for a long time and showed them photos of Mr. Perfect. Gradually, the photos got passed up and down the whole section, and then other people started to bring me pictures of their kids. None as nice as Mr. P., but still very nice. Sort of like a family on the plane. Very homey. A little village high in the sky.

The stewardesses went to serve their grub, and I started to go back to my seat when I saw, to my shock, an old friend from the east, from long ago when I practiced law in Washington. E., who looked slightly disheveled, definitely bald, and a little bit dangerous, sat down across the aisle from me. "I guess you wonder what's happened to me since we used to work together," he said.

"Well," I answered. All he needed was an albatross around his neck. The vibes otherwise were perfect . . . Where was the pilot ordering us all to return to our seats? Where was severe turbulence?

"I'll tell you why I'm moving to L.A.," he said. "It's because I'm so angry at my girlfriend that I can feel the Jeffrey Dahmer in me starting to come to life. I can feel the whites of my eyes flipping around when she asks me to move her couch when she knows I have a hernia. I can feel my fingers on her neck. That's why I started to think a lot about moving to another city. Maybe the women in Los Angeles are nicer. Maybe they're more old-fashioned."

"Oh, my God," I said. "Are you in for a surprise."

"That bad, huh?"

"Well, it would be wrong of me to apply subjective standards to an entire group of fellow humans who should not be stereotyped by gender or by city of origin, inasmuch as they all have their own precious individuality . . ."

"That bad, huh?" he repeated.

I didn't say a word. Sometimes, when you are in danger of saying gender-specific derogatory things about your fellow humans, it's best to keep quiet.

"All right," E. hissed grimly. "If I can't meet a nice girl, maybe I can start 'Man's World.' "

"Is that a gay bar idea?" I asked gingerly.

"Not at all," E. scoffed. "The farthest thing from it. In fact, it's a plan for a man's amusement park, where you could shoot simulated ducks, race simulated race cars, bet on a simulated stock market . . ."

"I like it."

"And then, the best exhibit, would be these simulated, life-sized woman robots who look just like real women, and you can cut them up and stab them and shoot them and they don't die, because they're not real. Isn't that great ?"

"No," I said. "It's really not great, and I have to go back to my seat now. I'm not feeling well."

Back at home base, my neighbor was preparing to send me a packet about outer-space exploration. "Plus," he asked, "do you have any small children who might enjoy a hands-on exhibit about space flight?"

"I have a small child who is an actual galaxy unto himself," I said. "An actual glowing ball of glory up in the sky even when he's kicking me."

"He'll love it at JPL," the man said.

Wednesday

Morning at my little condo. It's smoggy and I feel exhausted. I keep trying to remember what time it is Washington time. God, I feel sleepy. God there are a lot of cobwebs in my brain. I need some Brain Drano to clear out the clogged veins and arteries in my head. I need something to wake me up.

Poor me. Poor tired me. What a wretched day. I'm actually tired.

I reached over to the side of the bed and found the remote control for the Yamaha tuner. Press press, and on comes a spectacular Mozart Mass, surrounding me with sound that an emperor could not have gotten when the composer was still alive. For no money to speak of.

But, it's a little hot. Step, step, step. To my air conditioner. Whoosh. Out comes a blast of cold, negatively ionized air. Perfect.

Now, I'm hungry. Into the kitchen to pour a glass of delicious fresh orange juice, even though it's March. Push, push, push. Out comes a fluffy English muffin.

Back to my room. Press more buttons. Images on a screen of a tour of New Guinea. Of that compound in Waco. Of people dancing. Of an old movie about the Suez Canal, starring Loretta Young. Dozens, hundreds of images. More than Napoleon or Stalin could have imagined. For no money to speak of.

But I'm lonely. Wahh. Pick up the phone. Press, press, press. It's my pal John Coyne in Chicago. Blah, blah, blah. His jokes. My jokes. I'm still lonely. Push more buttons. My old Mom and Dad. More buttons. For a few dollars, in half an hour, I've talked to family and friends all over the country.

Let's see now. Mozart at the touch of a button. Climate change at the touch of a button. Orange juice in winter by a flick of the wrist. Pictures through the air. Talking to loved ones any time I want for almost nothing.

Small wonder we Americans are so unhappy.

Thursday

An audition at what used to be MGM in Culver City and now is something called Culver Studios. On second thought, I think this used to be called David Selznick Studios. Certainly out on Washington Boulevard there's a big replica of Tara, in the midst of a lot of car dealerships and banks.

I'm here to read for a part in a movie about a boy who leaves his parents and becomes a free agent. The boy is named North. The joke of the scene is that in it is also Alan Dershowitz, the lawyer and publicist for a certain junk-bond figure who shall be nameless. He's playing a cameo. I would play as an actor. That is, he would play himself, and I would play a fictional character.

I read for the director, Rob Reiner, the writers, Andy Scheinman and Alan Zweibel, and the casting woman, Jane Jenkins. I know them all, and we bantered happily for a long time beforehand. I told Rob I was working on a book about going private, and why it's so unethical. He said he had always wondered why that wasn't automatically a case of inside trading. I was damned impressed. A lot of people in the business don't see that, and he did. Yeah. An ally.

After I read my lines, I was told there were a few new lines, and I read them. I thought I did pretty well. But I'm differ-

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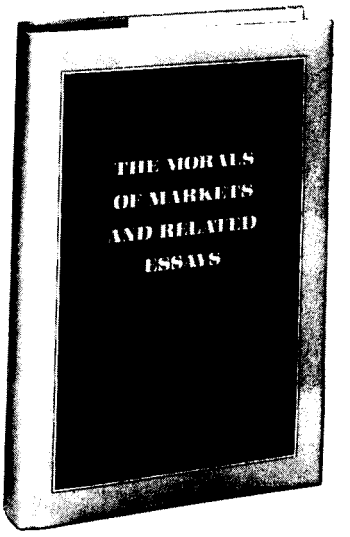

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ent from most actors. Usually they walk away from the set whining, saying they didn't do it right. Not me. I always think I did it great.

I strolled over after the reading to visit the room where I was cast for *Honeymoon in Vegas*. There were a few people there. I asked if I could be in the next Lobell/Bergman movie, about a policeman who gives a waitress a winning lottery ticket as a tip.

"Sure," said a young man. "Why not?"

I often think about how all the generals are back in Washington fighting the "culture wars," and I'm the only foot soldier who's actually made it to the front lines. But surprise, surprise, it's fun here at the battle for the hearts and minds of America. Come on out, people. I can't get you work, but you can get it yourself if you try. Come on down.

Friday

Another audition, this one at Sony/Columbia, which definitely used to be MGM. Today it's sunny with a slight haze. There's a mild onshore breeze. I walked down Katharine Hepburn Avenue, past the Spencer Tracy Building, along the side of the Bacall Building, past the James Cagney Building, and into a gorgeous late 1930s building. Maybe that's the one that used to be named after Robert Taylor.

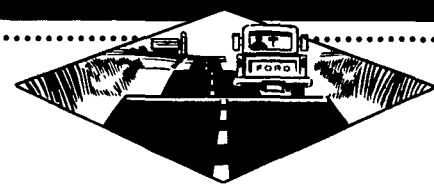
I walked up the stairs to the casting room. SURPRISE!!! The casting director is an old pal named Alan, whose nickname is "The King" (no one knows why). He actually gave me advice on how to read the part of a nebbishy wedding photographer. It was great advice, and I did a great reading. As I walked away, The King came after me down the hall. "You're a real actor now," he said. Then he applauded.

Oh, happy day. I'll happily let the folks I went to Yale with run the country. I just want to be free to roam the studios night and day. When I die, I want to come back as a ghost on a studio lot.

Preferably Sony/Columbia. There's something about that old MGM spirit that lingers in the air and smells as sweet as the jasmine that's in glorious bloom all over town.

Make fun of L.A. all you want. Tell me another city that actually smells like sweet flower blossoms for weeks at a time. ❐

THE NATION'S PULSE

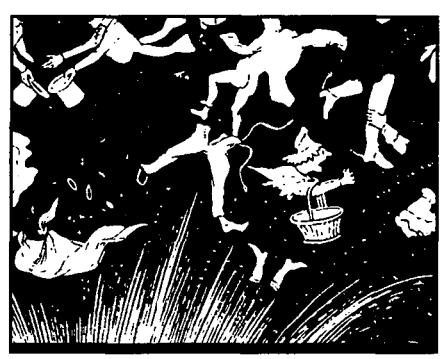


Infernal Machines

by Edward Conlon

Like most New Yorkers, James J. Falihee watched the reports of the explosion at the World Trade Center with mixed feelings of pity, anxiety, and dismay, but when Channel 2 News announced that it was suspected that a bomb was the cause, his reaction may have been unique. He shouted, "Oh, you stupid ass!" at the anchor and considered calling the station to complain, but the damage, all around, had been done.

James Falihee has taught at John Jay College for twenty years, and for the fifteen prior, he was technical director of Faurot, Inc., which manufactured criminal detection equipment. But for twenty-one years before that, he was with the New York City Police Department, retiring in 1958 as Supervisor of the Bomb Squad.



Born almost eighty-three years ago in Harlem, Falihee moved to the Bronx as a teenager and graduated from Manhattan College in 1932. A pre-med major, he intended to become a doctor but he had married—"That's personal . . . but it turned out swell. Was married fifty-eight years"—and the need to make money, coupled with the hardship of doing so during the Depression, dictated another vocation. He managed to earn an M.A. in Education from Columbia while doing "odd jobs" and taking civil service tests. At the end of 1936, he joined the Police Department and, because of his science background, was assigned to the crime lab after only a few months on patrol. At the time, there were two civilian chemists employed, and he became the first policeman-chemist in the history of the department.

Besides bombs, Falihee worked on a variety of cases with the crime laboratory, from narcotics to rape. One photograph shows him at a table with four other men, sifting a kind of granulated rubbish through screens into bushel baskets. "That's from a rape-murder case. There were seventeen barrels of ashes we took from an incinerator to find the bone fragments." A hit-and-run driver killed a woman and seriously injured her child in the Bronx one night, and no witnesses came forward. But Falihee matched fragments of glass from the scene with a headlight in the Automobile Lens Library he had assembled, and an arrest was made within hours. And in the February 1951 issue of *Park East* magazine, he opined in an article on "KO girls"—who enticed men into hotel rooms, spiked their drinks with knockout drops, and took their wallets—that beer was their beverage of choice because it best masked the taste of chloral hydrate. As the biochemical training of KO girls was never terribly rigorous, there was an occasional fatality: "The thing about poison," said Falihee, "is that enough of it will kill you."

Edward Conlon is a writer living in the Bronx.

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"My first bomb was on July 4th, 1940, at the World's Fair," said Falihee. "Like many of the things that happen, this should never have happened, in my opinion and everybody else's."

An attaché case had been "kicked around the British and the Polish Pavilions for eight days" before it was reported, and Detectives Joseph Lynch and Frederick Soscha were sent to inspect it. "They proceeded properly," he explained, "brought it to an open area behind the Polish Pavilion, cleared everyone out, including the cops, and opened it up with a glass knife. You never use metal tools. Anyway, they peeled the sides back and saw it, called out, 'Get back, this is the real thing.' And of course, it went off."

Both officers were killed.

Falihee and his partner collected all the evidence and examined it in the laboratory. They discovered a piece of an eight-day clock, made by the Connecticut Clock Company, which had wound down to detonate just as the detectives opened it up. "After that, we obtained a portable x-ray machine, a fluoroscope, to see all these packages we'd assume we'd get, and we did get. Some exploded, some were unfounded, some were peoples' lunches that were left in the subway. Some were simulated bombs, that looked like bombs even under the fluoroscope. Most of the time it turned out to be unfounded. I'd guess it's the same today. Whenever it turned out to be unfounded, the newspapers called it a hoax. 'Hoax' seems to have been one of their favorite words. Anyway, during the war, we looked at a lot of suitcases. Fellows leaving for war, forgetting things or not coming back, who left luggage in Grand Central or Penn Station."

The "Mad Bomber" set off at least thirty-two bombs in New York City for several years before his apprehension in 1958, when he was revealed to be one George Metesky, a former Consolidated Edison worker who resented his company's failure to compensate him for an on-the-job injury.

"He was a good machinist," Falihee says. "The bombs were well manufactured: clock-and-battery, small but potent, set in public places like theaters. He'd slit the seat open and conceal it inside. I can't tell you how many nights I spent in theaters, opening and fluoroscoping the seats, whenever there was a rip in the upholstery.

"The Bomber was from Waterbury and they sent him to Mattawan," says Falihee, referring to the mental hospital. "A nice old gentleman!" He laughed. "Here I am on the other side, now. He only seriously injured one person, if I recall, with a slight skull fracture. He was eventually released and has since died."

The Bomb Squad never looks beyond the technical and forensic aspects of an explosive or explosion. The identities, motives, and whereabouts of the responsible parties are left to other detectives or agencies. Even though an arrest was made in the World's Fair bombing, Falihee was reluctant to comment on that aspect of the case. "I never wanted to speculate, there were a lot of rumors but I wasn't there. I don't think they actually got the fella, though they do." The attaché case was originally left in the British Pavilion, and it was determined that the IRA was the culprit. "They give them credit for everything, though they do enough damage. I don't know who did it. That is not in the realm of my duties."

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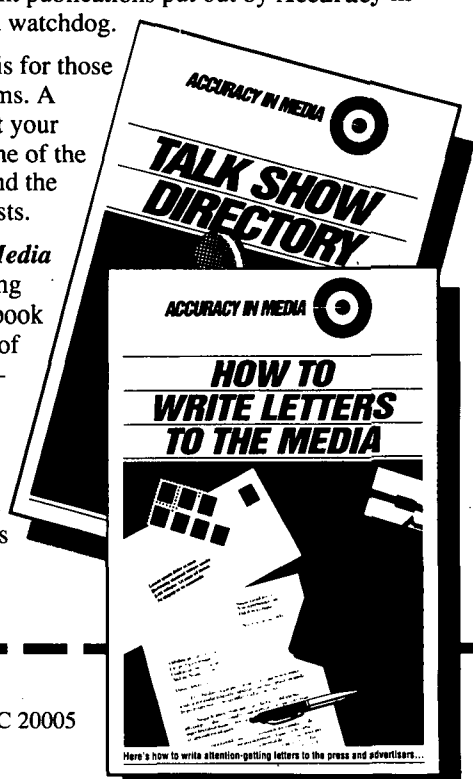
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As he watched the initial reports of the recent explosion, Falihee felt a sense of nostalgia, in its old, true meaning of "the pain of return": "I thought, gee, it's gonna be hard, with the water, all the debris. You tell everything from the scene search, you find fragments of the device. Today you probably have the same procedures, look for the same evidence.

"Anyway, they said it's some sort of explosive, all right. On Channel 2. I wanted to call up the anchorman, but I decided not to. I try to keep my fat Irish mouth out of it.

"One thing I've always hated was when someone said it was a bomb. It was the worst thing, the worst thing they could have said. Every lunatic calls in. There was a series of other calls claiming credit, and in half an hour there was a threat to the Empire State Building. We had to search the Empire State Building years ago, up and down, up and down, see if anything was out of place. You always evacuate, bring in cops and the maintenance people to see what's out of place.

"In the old days, I didn't want my picture in the papers anyway. Didn't need it. The press, I used to chase them. In fact, I used to threaten them. I haven't had my picture taken with the old magnesium flash since I played ball for Manhattan Prep, so it wasn't actually dangerous. But you're nervous enough, when you're right there with something that's alleged to be an infernal machine, without all those flashbulbs going off in your face."

These days, Falihee is untroubled by the infernal machines. Though he is on sabbatical from John Jay for the semester, he will return to teach there in the fall. His attentions are spent reading, "not newspapers, but scientific material and books where the butler did it," and among his three daughters, six grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. One grandson is a policeman in Buffalo, and a granddaughter is a pathologist at the Mayo Clinic. Though he walks with the assistance of a cane and seems to spend a fair amount of time visiting doctors, he has few complaints. His wife, Kathleen, died three years ago, but he "does not believe in mourning."

"In this world, you come without wanting to come," he said, "and you leave without wanting to leave. God treated me well. I didn't blow up." ❐

POLITICS

The Twelve Commandments

by Grover G. Norquist

Haley Barbour, the recently elected Republican National Committee chairman, would like to add a twelfth commandment to Moses' ten and Ronald Reagan's eleventh ("Thou shalt not speak ill of a fellow Republican"). Barbour's twelfth is: "Thou shalt not even *think* about the 1996 presidential election until after November 8, 1994."

After George Bush threw away his presidency, many conservatives immediately focused on the task of reclaiming the White House in 1996. But the real action for the next two years will be in what Barbour calls the "target-rich environment" of the 1994 elections, when twenty-two Democratic Senate seats will be up for grabs. More immediately, this year will see a special Senate election in Texas; special House elections in Wisconsin, Mississippi, California, and Ohio; governor's races in New Jersey and Virginia; and state legislative races in New Jersey, Virginia, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

Off-year elections can redefine a party. In 1966, two years after the Goldwater debacle, Republicans gained forty-seven seats in the House and four in the Senate, eight governorships, and ten state legislative chambers. Richard Nixon's non-stop campaigning helped win him the party nomination. In 1978, Republicans picked up fifteen House seats, three Senate seats (defeating three nationally important liberals), six governorships, 279 state legislative seats, and the majority in seven chambers. Ronald Reagan learned from the Richard Nixon of 1966.

Each would-be presidential candidate has at least two years to impress the Republican Party with his ability to raise funds, campaign effectively for other candidates, and champion new issues and legislation. That's what Ronald Reagan did when he embraced the Roth-Kemp supply-side revolution after he lost the 1976 Republican nomination. The voters of California helped define the Reagan presidency when they voted in June 1978 to pass the Jarvis-Gann initiative, Proposition 13, which cut their property taxes in half and required a two-thirds vote of the state legislature to raise new taxes.

Presidential candidates follow election results. After the success of Proposition 13, a number of other states put similar initiatives on the ballot. (Idaho's referendum was actually identical to Proposition 13, with "California"

Grover G. Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform.

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whited out and "Idaho" typed in.) Such copycat initiatives put tax cuts on the political agenda and every Republican running for president in 1980, except George Bush, endorsed supply-side economics. Jack Kemp today opposes term limits, but after the 1994 election, when eight more states pass term-limits initiatives, adding to the impressive list of fifteen that already have them, Kemp may reconsider.

Off-year elections can be just as crucial in determining which issues hurt as which issues help. Just as Democratic victories in November of 1989 in New Jersey and Virginia traumatized pro-life Republicans victimized by flip-flop candidates, victories in the gubernatorial and state legislative races in those two states this November could squelch talk that the party needs to adopt a pro-choice platform to salvage its coalition.

The GOP is not lacking in innovative policies around which to build a platform. Massachusetts Governor William Weld argues for low taxes, free markets, and "tolerance" on abortion and homosexuality. Jack Kemp promotes economic growth through lower taxes. Pat Buchanan would have the Republican Party abandon free trade and limit immigration. Bob Dole leads the deficit hawks and guards against union power grabs.

A debate over policy will be useful for Republicans—provided they remember Ronald Reagan's Eleventh Commandment. What Haley Barbour is looking for is a way of airing those differences that does not focus on 1996. That is, he is looking for an alternative to fratricide. The GOP could do worse than have its leaders compete on the basis of who can help elect the most congressmen, senators, and state legislators in 1993 and 1994—just as armies promote the officers who capture the most enemy territory. Whither the party? Let the market decide.

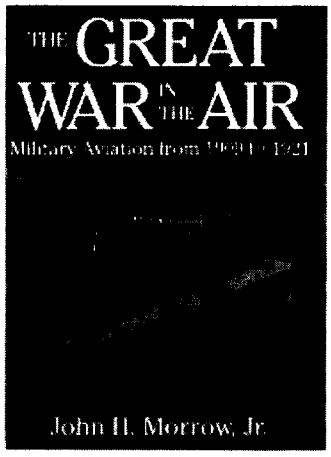
Two House Republicans, Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey, have pioneered party-building both personally and by creating new institutions to help other candidates. As a backbencher in 1986, Armey campaigned for twelve candidates, in 1990 for fifteen, and in 1992 for twenty. In 1992 Armey contributed more than $80,000 of his own campaign funds to support Republican challengers. Some were long-shots. Many won. Armey created PIPAC (Policy Innovation Political Action Committee) to support Republican candidates through contributions and also through the production of a brilliant vote guide that provides challengers with information on their opponents' voting records—and suggestions on "spinning" these votes. In 1992 he created a fax program to send information on key votes in Congress to Republican challengers. The National Republican Congressional Committee plans to build on Armey's efforts.

Gingrich inherited GOPAC from Pete du Pont in 1986. In 1992 alone, GOPAC raised $1.7 million for Republican House challengers, contributed another $100,000 directly to state legislative candidates, and trained more than 2,800 candidates and activists in forty-two seminars across the country. GOPAC also pioneered a conference-call training program that included Gingrich-led briefings for House candidates every Thursday night of the campaign.

In his home state of Georgia, Gingrich gets much of the credit for building the coalition that elected Paul Coverdell. In 1988, he led efforts that brought sixty new locally elected Republicans into office. And in 1992, Gingrich turned the tables on a Democratic attempt to gerrymand him out of office. He personally raised $150,000 for Republican House candidates in Georgia, leading to a three-seat pickup in the state—one-third of the Republican net gain in 1992. Thanks in large part to GOPAC, Republicans in Georgia also gained a total of twenty-two seats in the state legislature.

Republicans hold more seats in the House and Senate today than they did in 1978, when Jack Kemp, Bill Steiger, and Bill Roth led the fight to cut the capital gains tax and slash income tax rates. Now Haley Barbour is asking where the next Roth-Kemp will come from.

School choice might be that breakthrough issue. Only Bill Bennett went out to campaign for Linda Cross, the pro–school choice candidate for Wisconsin Education Commissioner. Cross narrowly lost on April 6 in a race that received national coverage. The state's Republican governor, Tommy



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Thompson, pushed through the choice legislation with Democratic legislator Polly Williams that gives 1,000 poor Milwaukee students a choice between public and non-religious private schools. Thompson is pushing to double the number to 2,000. John Engler of Michigan and Fife Symington of Arizona are pushing education choice in their states. Massachusetts' Weld has won public-school choice (once anathema to liberals, now their fall-back position to stop full choice), and is fighting to expand it. Activists pushing school choice initiatives in Oregon, California, and other states will be speaking directly to potential candidates ex–Education Secretary Lamar Alexander and South Carolina Governor Carroll Campbell—who have failed to lead on this critical issue.

Symington has signed a property rights protection bill that puts teeth into the takings clause of the Constitution. Local property-rights groups now number more than five hundred around the nation. Symington or another governor could become the leader and spokesman for property rights nationally.

The victims rights' movement and its sister movement to imprison repeat offenders without reduced sentences will have a measure on the 1993 ballot in Washington and maybe a dozen more states in 1994. Leadership on this crime issue is up for grabs. The 1993 and 1994 initiatives promoting victims' rights and longer incarceration periods will help write the 1996 platform on crime.

Though it too has as yet no leader, a challenge to the environmental lobby will take as much courage and is as important politically as Ronald Reagan's 1970 challenge to the welfare lobby. And the perennial taxpayer movement is similarly without its Jarvis or Reagan. California, Oregon, Arizona, and other states will likely have initiatives on the ballot to repeat the success of Colorado voters in requiring a vote of the people to raise taxes. Pete Wilson is rumored to be willing to support such a measure in California, not a bad way to revive his flagging prospects.

The men who deserve to lead the GOP in 1996 will be those who realize that the party's future will be charted this year and next; and that the 1994 elections offer a chance to end the Clinton era after two years, not four. ❐

THE MOSCOW SPECTATOR

A Land of Individualists

by Jonas Bernstein

I stood in front of the Intourist Hotel near Red Square, waiting for Olga. She was down from St. Petersburg for the day to pick up her visa for Britain, which she visits once a year. With her hard currency salaries at two joint ventures, Olga can be called part of the "nouveau riche" (a class which, according to a recent national survey published in *Moscow News*, 13 percent of the respondents "proposed jailing").

"Maybe this time I'll stay in England," Olga had told me on the phone the previous day, in a weary voice. Olga had been in the hospital for three weeks in February with some kind of monster flu. (Indeed, the authorities in St. Petersburg not long ago expressed alarm over the sharp rise in infectious diseases there.) "I have all the things I want here, materially. But life is getting more and more difficult. I'm tired."

Six o'clock came and went, and no Olga. After half an hour, I started to worry. After an unsuccessful search around Red Square, I returned to the entrance of the Intourist. Moments later—by this time I was frantic—she emerged from the pedestrian underpass, waving (and dressed to kill, as usual). "I was waiting here and a young man came up to me, totally drunk," she explained. "He asked me to go to a bar with him; I told him I was waiting for my husband. He said, 'No problem; I'll kill him,' and showed me a gun. Since you were due to show up any minute, I decided to take him for a walk. Aren't I a good friend?" After listening to his tales of banditry for half an hour, Olga left him staggering near GUM, on the other side of Red Square.

Such episodes are becoming normal in the Wild East, which is why many of its best and brightest want to get out. They all list the same reasons, in the same weary voice: the rampant inflation; the bleak daily landscape (sidewalks lined with people trying to resell pathetic trifles bought in state stores, destitute babushkas continually crossing themselves as they beg for rubles); and the growing army of drunken Lumpen of the kind described above. And, perhaps most of all, the uncertainty. Political, social, economic.

"I can't let my teen-age daughter out of the house at night anymore," Masha told me on the metro on the way home from "Jazzland," one of the few entertainment spots in Moscow not frequented by mafiosi. "It's impossible to be happy here. We have a national shock, a national stress, and I don't want to live under it." Masha—who, as a magazine editor, has a prestige job with a low (ruble) salary—is trying to emigrate to Western Europe. Her worries are also political. She's not like the pensioners who think it was better under Brezhnev; in fact, she worries that, in reaction to the current chaos, a return to totalitarianism is imminent. Masha says that some of the things she wrote during glasnost displeased the KGB, and is convinced she's still under threat. "The security services are exactly the same people today," she said. "But it's even worse, because now they're not under anyone's control."

The list of those who've had enough

Jonas Bernstein is a writer for Moscow Guardian *and an editor at* Kommersant*'s English-language weekly.*

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goes on and on. Volodya and Sasha, journalists; Natasha, a physicist; Svetlana, an interpreter. And many others dreaming of Paris or Zurich or London or Miami or Tel Aviv.

Yet there are those who wouldn't dream of leaving. "I was in Finland recently—Helsinki," Yuri was telling me over a cup of coffee at *Moscow News*'s bar. "A beautiful town, with lots of fat, prosperous Finns. And so boring. I'd go out of my mind."

These days Yuri only occasionally manages to drop by the Steklov Mathematical Institute, his putative place of employment. He's too busy making large amounts of money. The mathematician-turned-businessman still looks more like an egghead, eschewing the Armani suit and portable cellular phone that are standard gear for Moscow's entrepreneurs. Yuri wears a simple suit and totes his contracts in one of those street vendor–bought plastic shoulder bags (made in Hong Kong, with a logo reading "Montana" or something of the sort) which ordinary Muscovites use to stash their sausage, vodka, and copies of *Moskovsky Komsomolyets*. And he still relishes discussing theoretical math with his former colleagues. "I guess you could say it's my relaxation," he says.

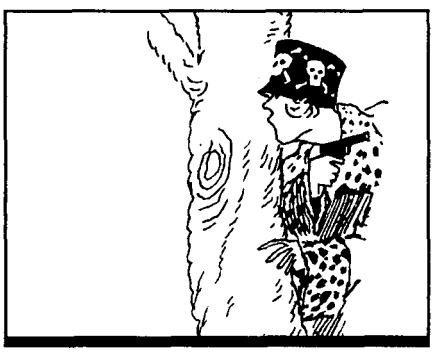
A few years ago, Yuri was making extra money selling his English skills to visiting American businessmen. Eventually he decided he could do just as well as the CEOs for whom he was translating. Today, his work involves "oil and money." He "has relations" with Western businessmen who want to invest in Russia's oil industry, he explained. "The Westerners have one question: 'How, and by whom, will my investments be guaranteed?' My company finds ways to guarantee investments, since the authorities here can't be trusted. Sometimes the guarantee is oil; sometimes it's gold."

In our discussion, Yuri evinced absolutely no interest in the Sturm und Drang "at the top," as the Russians refer to their political leadership. "I'm ashamed to say I didn't even turn on the TV," he said referring to the Yeltsin *v.* Khasbulatov return bout at the recent Extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies. He shrugged off the threat of Communist revanchism. "I think that people with one experience of totalitarianism are inoculated against it. Today, Russians are the world's biggest individualists."

But what about the pernicious, eroding effect of inflation on society? Yuri displayed little horror. In fact, he said, it is an ineluctable process which is actually performing a necessary function. "The inflation redistributes money, and therefore power, in a more natural way than did Communism. People who understand how to manage money can get it. Inflation is a very quick way to concentrate money in the proper hands." In other words, the deflating ruble is expropriating the expropriators' expropriators.

I found his self-assurance and optimism a bit disturbing. Particularly since I had spent the day before at my job at *Kommersant* magazine proofreading the English translation of the Russian tax authorities' procedures for the country's new Value-Added Tax. Part Two, actually; it was too long to be published in one issue. Without doubt, this document was spawned in the Third Circle of Regulatory Hell.

Indeed, since the advent of Victor Chernomyrdin as prime minister earlier this year, Big Brother has begun to squeeze the private sector. There are plans to set up a mega-computer bank to



track hard currency profits. In addition, a special tax police is being formed. This new paramilitary force, to be manned by former Interior, KGB, and military officers, has the right to "enter without hindrance premises occupied by natural persons and legal entities while performing its official duties" and, "in certain instances," to "plant" agents in businesses. And this is being done by the good guys.

So, what about all these things? I asked Yuri.

"VAT? Nobody's going to pay it, at least not what they owe. The smaller companies are the best off, because the smaller the company, the easier it can evade taxes. Bigger ones need advertising, for instance, which attracts attention. As for the tax police: sure, they will have a lot of competent professionals, and certainly they will catch some people. There will be a lot of noise. But the country is very large, and the tax police is very small. Not to mention that they will immediately be corrupted—in this country, every source of control is a source of corruption, by nature. And it doesn't matter how big their computer for tracking hard currency transactions will be. Most of these transactions are under the table: twenty times more hard currency is illegally traded than legally. The most common way of avoiding being tracked is that money is simply credited to bank accounts outside the country. It is impossible to track all movements of money."

So anything goes, I suggested.

No, Yuri answered: those in his circle, at least, draw the line at drugs and weapons trafficking. "Even people in this country understand that these things are immoral. Everything else is okay. If you can make a fool of the tax inspector, by all means do so."

Yuri also noted that the Russian market is much less violent today than in 1987, when private business was first permitted and competition often involved shaking down—and burning down—cooperatives. "There's much less shooting today. The business world now operates according to strict rules—laws, if you will. But these are completely separate from the state's rules: business and government are mutually exclusive systems. People invent ways to put money in their pocket, and government invents ways to get it, because it's government."

The exception to today's more peaceful business climate, he said, are the continuing problems between Russian and Chechen businessmen. "The Chechens are Muslims, for whom family ties are all-important, and who view all outsiders as potential enemies. And they have the tradition of the blood feud. I try not to deal with them. But on occasions that I must, I very carefully go over everything, telling them: 'Remember, guys: we agreed to *A*, *B*, and *C*, but not *D*.' Any misunderstanding can be very dangerous."

"So," he said after a pause, "it's still a good idea to sleep with a gun by your bed." ❐

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In Contempt

by Terry Eastland

In reporting the story of Justice Byron White's decision to retire, the press again indulged its penchant for simpleminded coverage of the Supreme Court. The *Los Angeles Times* advised that White's retirement "could mark the start of a gradual shift toward the left," the *Wall Street Journal* that it gave the president "a chance to return [the] Court to the center or tilt it his way," and the CBS Evening News that it meant "the voting power of the far [far!] right will be greatly undercut."

As the *Journal*'s Paul Barrett observed, such political labeling can be misleading. Barrett pointed out that Justice White has voted to uphold congressionally mandated affirmative action but has opposed local minority set-aside programs. Does that make him conservative or liberal? White's contrasting votes owe to the different sources of law at issue in these cases, and in any given case the job of the Court is to interpret and apply the law. Journalists routinely join in lamenting the "politicization" of the Supreme Court, but labeling justices right or left only adds to the problem.

I know the argument for using conventional political terms—in effect, that consumers of journalism are too dumb to absorb anything more challenging. But a reporter could at least insert the word "judicial" before the political label—as in judicial liberal or judicial conservative—thus indicating that a more complex phenomenon is at work.

Print reporters at times use headlines and leads to explain their political labels, but the journalism on the White story was less than helpful. According to a "news analysis" by Joan Biskupic, the *Washington Post*'s Supreme Court reporter, (judicial) liberalism means interpreting individual rights more broadly and preferring government authority less (than White has). But *U.S. News & World Report* wrote that in replacing White Clinton must choose between two (judicial) liberalisms: that which reigned when he was a student at the Yale Law School and "the older brand"—i.e., White's—that is "deferential to the actions of legislators." A reader of these stories could easily conclude that Clinton would make the courts less conservative regardless of which liberalism he appointed to the court.

Biskupic, having characterized the Warren Court and, to a lesser degree, the Burger Court as liberal, also said the Rehnquist Court "not only has been traditionally conservative but also has become more activist, willing to overturn precedent. . . ." But why is it activist to overturn a case that was wrongly decided in the first place? Biskupic did not explain that there are different kinds of judicial conservatism—one especially deferential to the text and history of the Constitution, another more deferential to the decisions of the Court, even if wrongly decided.

At least Biskupic's sins were ones of omission. *Newsweek*'s, on the other hand, seemed to derive from willful ignorance. Here is how the magazine described White's career: "Although White was once the Justice Department's top civil rights enforcer under Robert F. Kennedy, he opposes 'group preferences'—favoring women or minorities—to overcome the effects of past discrimination." *Newsweek* thus implied that a top civil rights enforcer *has to* support compensatory preferences; it never mentioned that the country has been engaged in an endless political argument on this issue, or that the Civil Rights Act of 1964, enacted two years after White went on the Court, explicitly opposed group preferences. White, the magazine went on to say, "has accommodated a gradual dismantling of the wall between church and state." It could just as easily have written that White has sought to reduce government hostility toward religion. *Newsweek* also said, "On privacy, White has voted for a heavy government hand." It could just as easily have written that White has voted to allow the American people themselves to settle matters like abortion through the elective branches.

A consistent assumption of journalists has been that Clinton will do a better job picking White's replacement than Ronald Reagan or George Bush did in choosing their justices. Why? Because Bill is a lawyer who once taught constitutional law (at the University of Arkansas Law School). And because he has a lawyer wife who

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also once taught law, and she will help him. Reporters redundantly noted these facts, as if they guaranteed that Clinton would do a great job at advancing his legal philosophy through his Supreme Court choice. No one bothered to ask whether Clinton even has a judicial philosophy.

Credit Clinton's spin doctors for at least a portion of this journalistic suspension of disbelief. A *New York Times* story on Clinton's search for a new justice duly celebrated how different Clinton is from "his recent predecessors," how he has "a strong intellectual interest in the Court and its workings," and how involved he is in selecting White's successor. The reporter, Stephen Labaton, ended by quoting his spinner, conventionally identified as a White House official. "What you have to understand [and Labaton got the message] is that unlike his recent predecessors, Clinton is a lawyer and he has taught constitutional law. . . . [He] is someone who can read opinions for himself, someone who stayed up late reading the opinions of John Marshall and wants to select a Justice whose opinions, like those of Marshall, withstand the test of time."

Where was that vaunted press skepticism? Is it not possible that Clinton will use his appointment power less to advance a legal philosophy than to please liberal interest groups (by picking the right kind of woman or minority) or to gratify some region of the nation politically key to him in the 1996 election? The only liberal to express any skepticism about Clinton as a deep legal thinker was the *New Republic*'s Jeff Rosen, who detected within Clinton's administration "an apparent lack of interest in legal philosophy."

Finally, the press was afflicted with what might be called Cuomo Incuriosity. Before withdrawing from consideration in April, New York Governor Mario Cuomo had been Clinton's leading candidate for the Court. Given this circumstance, you might think reporters would have looked up his legal writings. Not so. Only Jeff Rosen, who had done his researches of Cuomo during the campaign, when Clinton had hailed the governor as his first choice, bothered to inquire into the judicial mind, such as it might be, of Cuomo. Rosen managed to get the governor's attention, which led to an interview that usefully probed how Cuomo viewed the task of judging.

Clinton's new attorney general presumably will be among those who advise him on his Supreme Court selections. And on Janet Reno, the state attorney for Dade County at the time of her selection, the press also was less than diligent. *Legal Times* was the first to report—and the only press organ to report thoroughly on—Reno's use of Dade County grand juries to investigate not just specific crimes but government institutions and social conditions. Reno had those grand juries investigating, among other things, homelessness, child welfare, AIDS, public housing, school dropouts, and the development of minority enterprises.

I read through most of the reports and can testify to their conventional liberalism; the one on minority enterprises, for example, explicitly recommends "race-conscious" set-asides for minority-run businesses. Reno did nothing wrong in using grand juries as she did—Florida

pagan (pā' gan)

n. person who has no religion; one who worships idols or many gods; heathen

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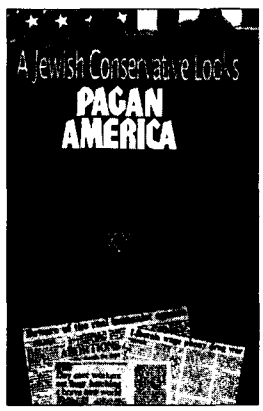

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law allows that—but from my reporting I learned she was more aggressive than most state attorneys in pursuing social policy ends. Her work in this area should have interested a generally listless press.

One of Reno's first actions as attorney general was to request the immediate resignations of the nation's ninety-three U.S. attorneys. Again, the press was insufficiently curious. These attorneys are appointed by the president, and can be removed at his discretion. Reno was carrying out a Clinton order. Some of the press duly noted that, as the *New York Times* put it, new administrations traditionally effect this changeover not all at once but gradually. But the *Times* failed to make two points clear.

The first was just what a managerial nightmare could lie ahead for the administration. By law the attorney general can appoint someone for 120 days, whereupon a federal district judge may name someone else for another 120 days. Of course, the president himself at any time may nominate his choices for the ninety-three jobs, who must then be confirmed by the Senate. But given the administration's slow personnel pace, no one should bet that Clinton will fill the vacancies soon. This year, thanks to the president's abrupt decision to clean house, some U.S. attorney offices could have *four* different bosses.

The second point was that Democratic senators had become restless. They wanted to reward their friends by making them U.S. attorneys; historically, senators of the incumbent president's party have looked on these jobs as theirs to give away. They knew that it had taken Bill Clinton a long time to land an attorney general, and were wondering how long it would take him to get around to naming the people they wanted to the U.S. attorney posts. This was the underlying, and underreported, political story: Clinton had to do something emphatic and public to please Senate Democrats.

In New York, incidentally, the famously impatient Sen. Patrick Moynihan moved within a week of Reno's action to announce his choices. "A Woman and a Black Proposed as U.S. Attorneys in New York" was the headline in the diversity-conscious *New York Times*, atop a story that conveniently included photos of both so that readers could see the woman was white and the black was not a woman: no "two-fers" here! ❐

THE GAY AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

Club El Malaria

by Ian Forman

I was watching the six o'clock news last night when the president came on. He said he was going to issue an order lifting the ban on homosexuals in the military. Then a lot of generals came on moaning and groaning about it. My first reaction, given all the gay propaganda we've been bombarded with in recent years, was that maybe the generals were right for once.

Then I remembered my own experience with gays in the military, and I wondered. We were off in the mountains of Burma trying to find the Japanese, and they us, and there was sporadic combat when we met. Oh, *that* war, you say—that was ancient, and isn't relevant anymore. Let me tell you: all wars are about your life being in danger. They have been since the beginning of time, and always will be.

Anyway, our base camp was in a Shangri-La valley called Imphal, high in the mountains along the India border. Our unit was housed in a compound of large thatch-roofed mud huts, bought from the natives. We were in a friendly village in a bamboo grove where the large trees were filled with orchid vines and surrounded by gardenia bushes. Except for the war—which we commuted to the surrounding mountains to fight—it was a paradise.

What about the gays?

We didn't think of them that way. They were gentlemen and kept that part to themselves. They had no political agenda. We were all mostly friends and shared a preoccupation with danger in the mountains. A pair of them had come to our unit from combat in the Western Desert in North Africa, where they had won the French Croix de Guerre for pulling critically wounded tank crews out of burning vehicles.

The war in the mountains was sporadic and they, bored during a period of inactivity, decided that our mess hall operation—food, menu, and atmosphere—could well be upgraded. So they took over.

The mud walls of the big thatch-roofed hut were soon whitewashed in a civilized way. White sheets were found for tablecloths and, for dinner, a little white-jacketed local native man was hired to stand in the corner waving a large fan. Our turbaned Indian kitchen help waited on tables. For the big breakthrough, they devised twenty-five recipes for bully beef, our staple canned meat, and purchased native delicacies and vegetables.

Tom and Jerry, as we shall call them, had made our humble mess hall into the jungle equivalent of a quality New York (their hometown) restaurant. As a final detail, there were fresh gardenias and orchids in bright brass native bowls on the breakfast table every morning. Nothing like the feminine touch to add a little class to the operation; it was as if we had brought our girlfriends and wives to war with us.

Their next project was Club El Malaria. That became the name of the mud hut next-door—when it was transformed into the best bar east of Calcutta.

Another unit man, who before the war had done stage sets on Broadway, paint-

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ed exotic murals on whitewashed walls and built the long bamboo bar behind which turbaned bartenders served.

Generals and privates alike, from all along the scattered front, ignored military rank to raise a toast to Tom and Jerry for their achievement. Medals would have been bestowed if possible. So famous did Club El Malaria become that a late-evening jeep service had to be laid on to return besotted celebrants safely to their far-flung units.

One day the Japanese came—not, alas, to drink. They overran our compound and we retreated. We saw the smoke rise up from the thatched roofs of Club El Malaria and the mess hall. It was a pathetic sight.

That night the fighting continued. Tom and Jerry were trapped together in a small bunker in front of the defense line about a quarter mile from our compound. A vicious Japanese assault swept by their position, isolating it. Tracer bullets stitched the darkness .

Tom stopped firing for a moment. Jerry dragged nervously on a cigarette.

"Care for a grenade?" Tom asked solicitously.

"No, thanks. Never touch 'em," said Jerry, with a feigned faggy flip of his wrist. Tom laughed. It relieved the tension. They were ambulance drivers, not trained for infantry work. But the shot-up ambulances and give-no-quarter desperation on both sides put them in the middle of combat. Two days later, we counterattacked and retook the ruins of Club El Malaria and the compound. A couple of Japanese dead were lying outside the bar.

When we arrived, Tom and Jerry were already there. Jerry held a gardenia blossom to each of his nostrils to cut the smell of the bodies in the hot morning sun. Jerry looked at the torched roof of Club El Malaria and said, "We'll rebuild."

"You're darned right," said Tom.

For the next three months the 15th, 31st, and 33rd Japanese Divisions surrounded the beleaguered defense perimeter of the Imphal base. But the airfield was operating. Supplies got in and the wounded out.

Club El Malaria was soon restored. The clientèle returned. Tom, a wealthy young man of independent means, made sure that scotch, gin, olives and club soda came in on the transport planes along with the food, ammunition, and field bandages. No one knew how he did it or asked.

One thing was sure. Club El Malaria was now a citadel to be defended to the death. The Japanese gave up the siege eventually and faded away over the mountains back into Burma.

Now back to the main question: should there be gays—openly and officially accepted—in the military? Should the longstanding ban be lifted?

Personally, I put the issue to the Tom-and-Jerry test.

Tom and Jerry knew that, ban or no ban, gays have to make it on their own. No Military Code stamp of approval can help in the end. In the deadly business of the military, in peace or war, the only approval that counts is the respect and protection your comrades can give you.

Tom and Jerry made it on merit—and furthermore, on courage. To say they gave us something extra to fight for would be stretching things a bit. But they did make that oddball stretch of the war a bit more civilized. ❐

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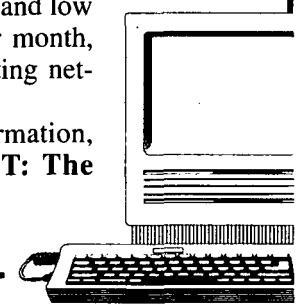

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Innocents and Broads

by James Bowman

When he was, for a week or so in March, the owner of the *New York Post*, Abraham Hirschfeld was represented by his enemies (i.e., the entire staff of the *Post*) as unfit to own a newspaper partly on the basis of the following "insensitive" or "sexist" joke he was said to have told: A man sees an attractive woman in a bar and, favoring the direct approach—no doubt like Mr. Hirschfeld himself—asks her if she would like to sleep with him. "Not for a million dollars!" replies the woman. "Good," replies the man, "we're already talking price!"

What is crass in the mouth of Honest Abe Hirschfeld comes out looking almost like class at the hands of Adrian Lyne in *Indecent Proposal*. Like Lyne's earlier success, *Fatal Attraction*, this is what they call in Hollywood a "high-concept" movie. Its premise can be summed up in the question: Would you consent to your wife's sleeping with another man for one night for $1 million? Or, if you are a woman, would you do it if your husband consented? Everybody has an opinion. Most people, in fact, have two—one public and one very private. That hypocrisy is amusingly caught by the film's sleazy lawyer (Oliver Platt), who tries to cheer up Woody Harrelson for having sold Demi Moore for a night to Robert Redford by saying: "You're lucky. I couldn't have gotten $500 for my girlfriend—not that I would do that!"

The intrinsic interest of the question is such that you almost forget the absurdity of Robert Redford as a subtle and sensitive and romantic (to say nothing of handsome!) billionaire. In reality, the kind of guy likely to make such an offer would have the subtlety, sensitivity, and romantic good looks of Ross Perot—or Abe Hirschfeld. But we can forgive the movie this implausibility as well as the superficiality of its characters because it raises an issue that Hollywood would not dare to raise otherwise, which is the issue of how far, in spite of the sexual revolution, sex and fidelity are still bound up with money and power and traditional male/female roles.

This issue is treated with a certain hard-eyed realism by Adrian Lyne up until the point at which, I presume, the money men told him he had to tack on a soppy, love-over-lucre ending. The oafish Harrelson says to Demi: "I was afraid you wanted him. I was afraid you were right to want him. I thought he was the better man. I know now he's not; he's just got more money." But we don't know he's not. As between the handsome and chivalrous billionaire and the jerk who gambled away what little money they had and so got them into this mess in the first place, there's not much doubt in my mind which one most women would think is the better man. Maybe not in Lyne's either.

I liked that he made Demi Moore pretend that she was doing it for her husband—and that he put that together with Redford's paradoxical assurance that "nothing's going to happen you don't choose." I liked the interesting reversal by which it was the husband who felt the more violated by the transaction, ostensibly contracted for his benefit, while the wife, otherwise a very nineties-type working woman, found herself gravitating back, willy-nilly, to the man who could fulfill the role of masculine protector when her husband had made such a botch of it. Also, the theme of power over sex was repeated in Demi Moore's boss's forcing her to meet her billionaire again for his own economic benefit: "I would never dream of forcing you to do anything against your will—except this one time. Now move your ass or you're fired."

It's okay, though. She and Woody patch it up. Hollywood can never believe that innocence is lost for good. That may be one reason why it is so regularly transformed into mere cuteness, as in such movies recently doing the rounds as *The Sandlot*, *Cop and a Half*, *Jack the Bear*, and the latest truly repellent and Disneyfied version of *Huckleberry Finn* called, way over-familiarly, *The Adventures of Huck Finn*. They're all awful, but the combination of Elijah Wood as a too young, too clean, too goody-goody, suburban-soft Huck and Courtney B. Vance as a moralizing Jim ("Just because you're taught something's right and everybody believes it's right don't make it right") gives Disney the prize once again for crass sentimentalizing.

One reason to hate cuteness is that real innocence needs to be taken seriously. It is part of the great American mythology of youth and the fresh start. Fascination with it is even what lies behind the story of the amoral waif who gets a government-sponsored makeover as an assassin in *Point of No Return*. This is a remake of Luc Besson's *La Femme Nikita*, which was itself a parody of American girl-cop flicks that was half-funny and half-serious. With typical obtuseness, Hollywood didn't realize it was being sent up and cast Bridget Fonda as the beautiful young killer for whom are repealed not only the laws of biology but also those of physics, as she regularly takes out men twice her size with a single blow of her deadly fist.

James Bowman is the Times Literary Supplement*'s American editor and* TAS*'s regular movie critic.*

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Like her French prototype Nikita, played by Anne Parillaud, she is a feminist version of Frankenstein's monster: humanity re-created, but from a more rational pattern. It was typical of the French bureaucratic mind and of French cynicism to make her also the tool of a government routinely engaged in assassination and political murder, but Americans are likely to wonder just what government agency, apparently headquartered beneath the Federal Triangle metro station in Washington, is responsible for blowing up hotel rooms full of people in California or assassinating well-heeled ladies on the streets of New Orleans at Mardi Gras. Even such things as these, however, cannot be more improbable than making Miss Fonda so innocent of the ways of the world that she has to learn how to shop. We truly are on alien territory here!

For once you start with your fantasy of the New Woman, you might as well reinvent the rest of the world while you are at it. It can be as much a male as a female fantasy, and there is more than a touch of Pygmalion and Galatea in the relationship between Gabriel Byrne and Miss Fonda in *Point of No Return* just as there is in that between Don Johnson and Melanie Griffith in an appalling remake of *Born Yesterday* that reminds us of the genuine innocence it took to create the original Billie Dawn, the brassy dame portrayed by Judy Holliday in the 1950 original. In the nineties nobody—but nobody!—says, as Billie is made to say, "Even if I am stupid, it hasn't hurt me. I've got what I want, and as long as I can get what I want that's all that matters."

Instead of putting such an impossible line in the mouth of Melanie Griffith, Douglas McGrath, the screenwriter, should have made her say: "Even if I am educationally disadvantaged, I can still feel compassion for all mankind." Or, as the ghost of Babe Ruth says in *The Sandlot*: "Follow your heart, kid, and you'll never go wrong." In fact, he does give charming Billie the line: "Books only take you so far: you can't go on what you know, you have to go on what you feel." Now *that* sounds like something that a bubble-headed tomato of our own times would actually say, though I'm afraid that McGrath and the director, Luis Mandoki, mean it to be a moment of epiphany. The difference between Judy Holliday's Billie and Miss Griffith's is the difference between innocence and stupidity.

I am more kindly disposed towards the innocence portrayed in *Benny and Joon*. There are a lot of laughs, and Johnny Depp does a terrific job as Sam, the subliterate clown with a passion for Buster Keaton. But it tries too hard for its whimsical effects—and a little bit of this kind of whimsy goes a long way, anyway. So much innocence and gentleness in all its characters makes it look too much like the product of a hippie commune of the Woodstock era. The real world has got to get a look-in somewhere or else the gentle souls who have been protected from it will appear as merely insipid inhabitants of a dream landscape—a danger that *Benny and Joon* does too little to skirt.

As we have seen, Hollywood does not do the real world very well these days. For that you usually have to go abroad, and the Movie of the Month is an amazing Italian depiction of innocence and experience by Gianni Amelio called *Il Ladro di Bambini.* It is the story of a young *carabiniere* or national guard soldier named Antonio, played by Enrico Lo Verso, who is rather improbably ordered to escort two children to a children's home after their mother is arrested for making a prostitute of the little girl, aged 11. The girl, Rosetta, is played by Valentina Scalici, a miraculous young performer with no acting experience, and her younger brother, Luciano, is portrayed with scarcely less skill by another inexperienced child, Giuseppe Ieracitano.

Antonio's partner slopes off to visit a girlfriend and leaves him to escort the children alone. When the children's home in Bologna refuses them because of Rosetta's past, he takes it upon himself to escort them to another home in Sicily. The film utterly catches you up in the developing relationship between the street-smart city kids and their protector, who is fresh from the Calabrian *campagna* and much less versed in the ways of the world he is supposed to be protecting them from. It is predictable that the children develop an affection for him and he for them during the course of their journey from Milan to Bologna to Sicily, but what is less predictable is that he is able to give them back some of their lost innocence by introducing them, perhaps for the first time in their lives, to a real family—his own.

In this context, the ending is shattering. It will be a long time before I forget the look on Lo Verso's face as his superior officer suggests that the situation he has allowed himself to get into with the two children smacks of impropriety and that he has compromised himself and his future in the *carabinieri*. The injured innocence of the film is now his, and he finds himself on a level with the children whom he has tried to help. Their lost Eden really *is* lost, and the three of them are left in the end in a desolate urban landscape with the prospect of their own isolation from the world of work and love and family. Rosetta never made a million dollars a trick, like Demi Moore's character in *Indecent Proposal*, but she knows a lot better what innocence is worth. ❐

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C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON:
AN APPRECIATION

by JOHN TRAIN

Few management philosophers have combined so much wit and wisdom, and none was as charming, as Professor C. Northcote Parkinson, who died last March. His friends called him Cyril. He was a stocky, ruddy man who looked like a merchant marine captain. He talked that way too: with confident precision. He wrote some sixty books, including *Parkinson's Law*, *Mrs. Parkinson's Law*, and *The Law and the Profits*,[1] and delivered countless lectures. An extraordinary amount of truth lies in some of his sayings. The most famous, of course, is "Parkinson's Law," namely: *Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.* He cites Whitehall:

Colonial Office Staff	
1935	372
1954 (with 17 fewer colonies)	1601

He once gave me another admirable example:

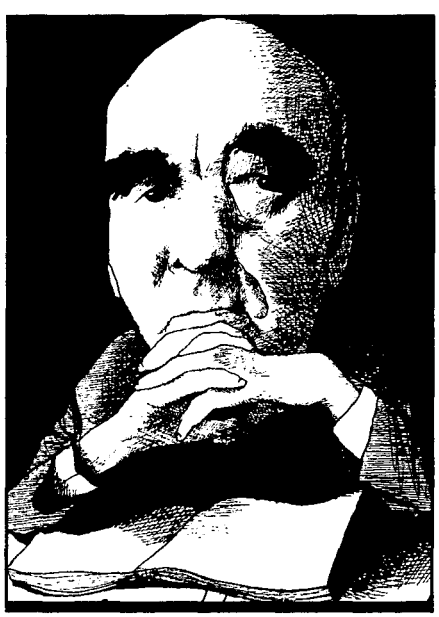
> Ronald Reagan, when he was governor of California, asked me to address his cabinet. I told him about the Bay Bridge, which connects San Francisco with Oakland. Fourteen painters were appointed to paint the bridge from one end to the other, and then paint their way back again. Since then the spraying machine has been introduced, so that the job can be done much faster.
>
> Nevertheless, by the time Ronald Reagan had become governor, the number of men engaged in permanently painting the bridge had risen, I believe to 77! After my talk to his cabinet Ronald Reagan tackled this problem, and was able, I heard, to cut the staff of painters to 50-odd. I don't doubt that they have since crept back up to 90.

I might say in passing that those are his exact spoken words. Cyril Parkinson was one of the rare individuals who could speak in a language pure enough to go directly into print.

A more recent instance of his First Law is the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Daniel Seligman has noted in *Fortune* that according to the Statistical Abstract of the United States, the number of Department of Agriculture employees has since 1932 risen implacably by 2.7 percent per annum, while the number of farmers has *declined* by 2 percent per annum.

Parkinson's Second Law, *Expenditure rises to meet income*, does not require amplification for any observer of government. The U.S. experience has been that higher taxes mean bigger deficits. The only way to limit the growth of government is to starve it.

A corollary is *Expansion means complexity, and complexity decay.* This principle seems as immutable as Acton's "Power tends to corrupt." In the U.S., one would have to note the tremendous cost of overregulation, a variation of complexity that some economists estimate robs us of up to a third of our GNP growth. Parkinson strongly favored pushing decision-making down as far down as it can go. He loved the way American companies often have autonomous divisions that may even compete with each other. He thought that devolution would be good for Scotland, and joining Europe bad for Britain.



In many countries, Parkinson observed, declining productivity arises from the twin burdens of inflation and taxes, including estate taxes, which tempt the worker to spend now rather than produce and save. Why should a 60-year-old work like a demon to save for his children when almost half his income goes in tax (including state and city), and more than half of what's left after that is taken by estate taxes? Parkinson (anticipating Laffer) calculates that as you cut the tax bite people work much harder—as in Hong Kong—and government revenues rise. Of course, this means that government must concentrate on its total receipts, rather than using high taxes as a tool of social engineering, which by cutting incentives may lead to economic stagnation.

On this theme, Parkinson, visiting Sweden, once startled his hosts with a "Swedish Law:" *Policies designed to increase production increase employment; policies designed to increase employment do everything but.* The world as a whole has turned over enough so that this point of view is now generally accepted, even in Sweden, except in trade union circles, which often believe in make-work projects. But if you soak up the labor pool in non-productive government jobs, as Perón and Mitterrand did in their first incarnations, you have a drop in overall output accompanied by a rise in taxes to pay for the unneeded public sector employees. This turns unemployment into under-employment, which is typical of socialist economies and may be worse than out-and-out unemploy-

[1] *Parkinson's Law* remains in print from Houghton Mifflin.

John Train is the founder of Train, Smith Investment Counsel in New York. His ten books include The Money Masters *and* Wit: The Best Things Ever Said.

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ment. The Russian joke used to be, "We pretend to work, and they pretend to pay us." The Bulgarian refinement was "They *can't* pay us as little as we work."

One that he tried out on me but has not been popularized is *Democracy equals inflation*. Where the working population, through control of the electoral process, ultimately determines its conditions of employment, there will be more demand for higher pay than for increased production. One sees this acutely in our big cities, which are strangled by municipal unions.

Parkinson observes that the peak of magnificence of an institution's physical headquarters often coincides with the start of its period of decadence. Attila the Hun had his headquarters in the saddle—no Pentagons. Conversely, the League of Nations expired shortly after occupying its palace in Geneva, the Bourbons started downhill upon the completion of Versailles, and so on. Domestically, there are Donald Trump's "trophy properties:" the Trump Tower, the Trump Palace, and the other trumpery that led to Chapter 11.

An important suggestion that as far as I know Parkinson never published is that when something goes wrong, do *not* try, try again. Instead, pull back, pause, and carefully work out what organizational shortcomings produced the failure. Then, correct those deficiencies. Only after that return to the assault. "When a new general takes command of a defeated army, he does not immediately launch into a series of attacks. He reconstructs the chain of command, retrains the unit, and gets the army ready to fight effectively."

One of his observations to me, which must be recognized as generally true, is this: "In America all professors of economics tend to be leftists. Why? Because if an able youngster has an interest in economics, in figures, and has conservative views, he goes into business. Whereas if he has left-wing views, he becomes a professor. So academic economists tend to be left-wingers. Business should never have let that come about. You let the case go by default. The only answer is for business, in turn—having let the left wing capture the schools—to capture television. It's essential that this be done. Television is far more important than the schools. People get their ideas from television, and American television now has a left-wing bias."

Persons familiar with the Kafkaesque techniques of Russian and Chinese—and, alas, other—governments will recognize the grim validity of *Delay is the deadliest form of denial*. "Justice delayed is justice denied" was, of course, said by others, and endless stalling is now a standard litigator's trick. "Jerking them around," lawyers call the process. They spend years of time and millions of dollars on unnecessary discovery proceedings, drag in the opponent's friends and relations to embarrass him to the maximum extent possible, and perhaps get him to settle for much less than he should get to avoid inordinate further expense. (Perhaps the answer would be to stick such pettifoggers with the other side's costs if the judgment goes against them, as in England.)

Yet another of Professor Parkinson's useful principles is that the matters most debated in a deliberative body tend to be the minor ones where everybody understands the issues. This insight flows from another Parkinson law, that deliberative bodies become decreasingly effective after they pass five to eight members. In other words, a board of fifty has little chance of making the large, often technical decisions, or even of selecting the right subjects to debate. Often it will be dominated by unrepresentative insiders: a politburo. For this reason, a large board usually creates an executive committee that actually does the business, and in essence becomes the real board. When that committee, inevitably expanding, becomes too cumbersome in turn, it should hive off a subcommittee small enough to act.

Parkinson thought that both the American and British legislative systems were seriously defective, and proposed a solution: secret voting. "You may be aware," he once said to me, "that until the nineteenth century, popular elections took place in public, on the 'hustings.' A man would spring up and cry, 'I vote for Sir James!' Obviously, this invited every sort of pressure and bribery, and in due course popular votes were made secret. In the legislature voting remained public. Why? It is now technically possible for a legislator to press a button and record his vote electronically. That would permit him to vote according to his best judgment, instead of responding to pressures that may be contrary to the public interest."

Government that is *too* responsive to shifting popular enthusiasms—government by poll, or as some have urged here, "electronic town meetings"—Parkinson considered disastrous.

"Popular democracy as an experiment is dead, to my mind," he once said to me at dinner. "There are many symptoms of its collapse in both our countries. In England, for example, educational standards are falling rapidly, although not yet to the degree seen in America. Crime rates are soaring. Employment is declining. These are some of the prime concerns of a country! In parts of northwest England, government has essentially broken down; Liverpool is an example. Northern England is sinking. And chronic inflation is a very bad sign."

A more important Parkinson rule than many realize is simply, *Don't take yourself too seriously*. It's almost an echo of Talleyrand's famous advice to a young diplomat, "Surtout point de zèle": very roughly, "Don't get carried away." ❐

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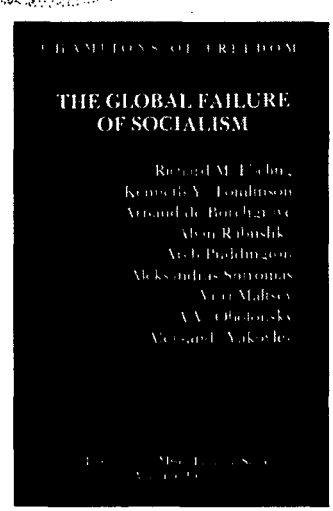

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THE DREAM AND THE NIGHTMARE: THE SIXTIES' LEGACY TO THE UNDERCLASS

Myron Magnet

William Morrow / 256 pages / $20

reviewed by TOD LINDBERG

Myron Magnet's *The Dream and the Nightmare* is an impassioned and useful encapsulation of what has gone wrong in American urban society over the past thirty years. This slender volume traces the growth of an underclass stubbornly resistant to opportunities for self-improvement, the rise of crime and drug use that has made vast stretches of the urban landscape into places of terror for those unable to escape, the birth in the 1980s of the appalling social pathology that goes by the name of "homelessness," the debilitating effect of racial quotas, and on and depressingly on. He does this, moreover, with evident feeling for those whose lives have borne the brunt of judicial activism that lets criminals go free, of welfare policy that encourages dependency, of ideas about personal liberation that turned the seriously mentally ill loose on the streets.

To those who have read Charles Murray on welfare policy, James Q. Wilson and George Kelling on crime, Thomas Sowell on affirmative action, Robert Bork on judicial overreaching, Roger Kimball and Dinesh D'Souza on campus politics—or for that matter, those who have been regular readers of *The American Spectator*—this book's account of "the sixties' legacy to the underclass" will no doubt sound familiar. Magnet, a member of the board of editors of *Fortune* magazine and a fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, draws heavily on these people. He has read them carefully and interviewed most of them besides. (Oddly missing from Magnet's sources is George Gilder, who has probably done more than anyone to educate people on these matters, and whose *Visible Man* remains the single most riveting account of the human cost of social welfare policy I have read.)

Magnet's principal claim to originality (though others, including Gilder, have fished in these waters as well) lies in his comprehensive attack on the notion that the economic incentives created by social policy are adequate to explain the growth of the underclass. (He also attacks the left's version of the economic argument, namely, that what the poor lack first of all is economic opportunity.) These "incentives to fail," as Murray called them, do indeed exist. As Magnet notes, "The whole welfare package provides a living often equal in economic terms to a $20,000 a year job, payable, if not quite on demand, then very nearly so." But whether it's welfare or criminal behavior or whatever, he wants us to get beyond narrow cost-benefit analyses of incentives:

> In the ongoing debate over the misery index, the illegitimacy rate, the income distribution, the labor market, the true number of the homeless, or the fit between jobs and job seekers—generally framed in sociological, even statistical, language—the most basic question is never so much as raised, much less examined.
>
> What is society for? Why do we need it? Without this large question as a beacon, how is it possible to judge whether policies are aimed in the right direction, directed to producing the good society?

He wants us to look to a prior cause of our alarming social condition, a changed cultural landscape that is the legacy of the radicalism of the 1960s. The change entailed the triumph of some singularly bad ideas and some even worse answers to the basic question of what society is for: the notion that the poor are powerless to do anything about their poverty, that their poverty is shaped by forces utterly beyond their ability to influence. That there is no distinction between the deserving poor (the old, the sick, the widowed) and the undeserving poor (the able-bodied but indolent). That social conditions make crime inevitable, and that crime is a kind of rebellion against oppressive social conditions. That the very idea of "mental illness" is questionable in a society that is, itself, very sick. That the way to treat blacks and other minorities fairly is to provide preferential treatment to them because of the group they belong to. That Western culture has no particular claim to our allegiance, since it is founded on injustice and has wreaked havoc on others wherever it has spread. So Magnet revisits some of the leading texts of the counterculture, from R.D. Laing on mental illness to Michael Harrington on poverty to Norman Mailer celebrating criminals as rebels, in an effort to figure out why we are where we are.

To Magnet, the success of this radicalism—and, as well, the eclipse of such older ideas as personal responsibility, individual rights, and so on—is the real explanation for so many wrecked lives in the inner city, as well as the spiritual impoverishment he diagnoses in those better off. The "Haves" of the "majority culture," Magnet argues, adopted these ideas wholeheartedly and in the expectation that they were doing the "Have Nots" a service. Their intentions were above reproach. But when the Have Nots too came to believe what the Haves told them, they found that rather than being liberating, these ideas only made things worse.

The importance of culture explains why some do manage to escape from grinding poverty. They have rejected the ideas of the 1960s, devoting themselves instead to such older ideas as family, hard work, discipline. And culture explains why others remain mired in poverty despite such opportunities as exist to escape it and the vast sums society expends in their behalf.

Magnet's prescription for undoing the legacy of the 1960s is less well fleshed out. He comes to it only very late in the book, and it arrives as little more than an impassioned plaint: "The first answer . . .

Tod Lindberg is editorial page editor of the Washington Times.

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is to stop doing what makes the problem worse. *Stop* the current welfare system, *stop* quota-based affirmative action, *stop* treating criminals as justified rebels, *stop* letting bums expropriate public spaces or wrongdoers live in public housing at public expense, *stop* Afrocentric education in the schools." More broadly, we must recover our belief in the "few fundamental ideals" that constitute "the soul of American society."

His attack on the narrow economic explanation for the emergence of an intractable underclass is surely on target. And surely it is not wrong to look to culture, in the sense in which Magnet uses the term, as the source of the ideas that have governed and now govern how we organize our affairs. Indeed, the proposition would be so obvious as to verge on tautology, had it not come under attack from Marxists and others who see "culture" as a mere reflection of existing objective conditions.

But it is not sufficient to identify a changed culture as the problem and those who have created and propagated it as the guilty parties, and leave it at that, as Magnet does here—or rather, leave it with that urgent appeal to change the culture back. "Stop . . . stop . . . stop" is an echo, conscious or not, of William F. Buckley, Jr.'s famous description of a conservative as someone whose role is to stand athwart history, shouting "Stop." The problem is that, on the basis of the evidence, history is not listening. At any rate, it does not stop.

No book has been written with more dedication to the proposition that ideas have consequences than *The Dream and the Nightmare.* Here is a typical formulation, in this case on homelessness:

> How legions of the mentally disordered ended up on the street, cold, sick, fearful, and in harm's way, is an object lesson in how the cultural revolution worked—how advanced ideas about personal liberation came together with advanced ideas about political enfranchisement to create a climate of opinion and a body of social policy that harmed those at the bottom of society in the name of doing them good.

Yet exactly how and why ideas come to have consequences is a subject on which the book is oddly silent. In descriptions like the above, cultural ideas seem to turn into social policy rather naturally, almost mechanistically. In any case, the process seems somehow self-propelled, and Magnet doesn't find it very interesting.

In fact, it is central. Ideas become policy by means of politics. When you say little or nothing about the how and why of the politics of that transformation—and Magnet is by no means the first to gloss over the matter—you have failed to offer an adequate explanation.

Magnet embraces a commonly held view: Acting out of good intentions, those who make social policy embraced ideas that, when implemented, had disastrous, unintended consequences. This view, it seems to me, is questionable on at least two fundamental points. The first is whether the intentions of the policy makers were really so good. And the second is whether policy makers really survey the current landscape—the one that reflects the presumably unintended consequences—and think it is so bad as all that.

Both of these questions are, at their core, political. To answer them, we need to consider such things as political ambition and whether the ideas the culture

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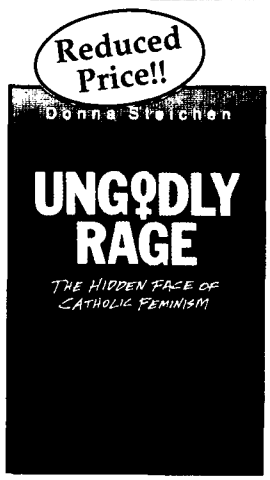

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propagated might have been useful in the service of fulfilling political ambitions.

Here, for example, is Magnet asking a question that ought to point us in the right direction: "Who has profited by allowing the homeless to occupy and debase public places?" But his answer stops well short. He says, first, that it was surely not the advertised beneficiaries, namely, the homeless themselves, especially the homeless mentally ill who need medical care. "Take away the mentally ill, who did not benefit, and who is left? The biggest contingent is that miscellaneous collection of alcoholics, drug users, petty criminals, and dropouts who used to be called bums." Unintended consequences in all their horror.

Yet Magnet mentions no one else. How about those who make a living as advocates for the homeless? Less crassly, how about those who saw in homelessness a magnificent cudgel for beating the Reagan administration in particular and an unjust capitalist society in general? How about those who would like to remake this society in such a fashion that they and their friends rule it? Or, at least, rule over more of it, in the case of an expanding state sector?

I do not intend to try to settle the question of motives and the other political questions here. I am prepared to concede that many politicians and policy makers did act out of a sincere desire to help the poor or the homeless. But, as well, many politicians saw in such issues as these the opportunity to shape a political order more to their liking, an order in which their role would be greater.

That was then. As for now, it is truly horrible to think that anyone could look at the condition of psychotics living on the streets, of wrecked lives in the inner cities, and pronounce it acceptable. But it is hard to find any indication that politicians find it intolerable. Some do, of course; the majority, however, fall into a different category.

Some don't care. Some want government to do more, perhaps with the same good intentions. But we should take into account the possibility that some of those who say they want to do more, or express little reservation about how things are, do so because it serves their ambition to do so. Welfare has, after all, expanded the power of the government while creating a political constituency (and I do not mean merely welfare recipients) that will vote to keep in power people who want to expand government.

Magnet's cultural critique, though valuable, is also a kind of straitjacket. Here, again—much in the fashion of the argument that perverse economic incentives account for our problems—we have a structural explanation. Our perverse culture is responsible. So we will now think about how we can change this culture. Just as we sometimes expend much energy thinking about how we might change those perverse economic incentives.

The salient fact is that we—and I mean all who agree with Myron Magnet's "stop . . . stop . . . stop" litany, which includes me—do not have the power to change those incentives or to be heeded when we say "stop." The first step in getting it is realizing we need it. Only when we have it can we be done with saying "stop," and start the stopping . ❐

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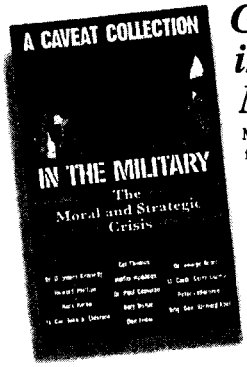

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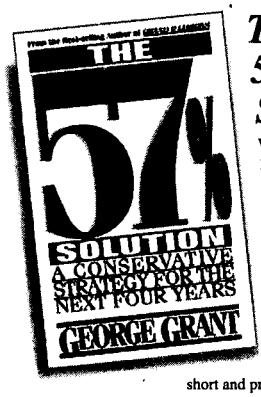

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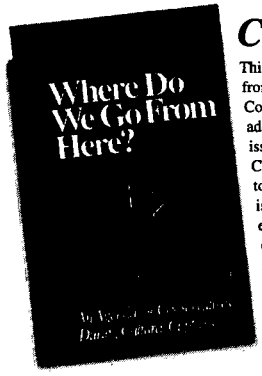

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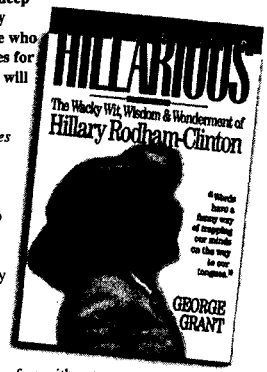

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FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT: ESSAYS AND MINORITY REPORTS

Christopher Hitchens

Verso / 339 pages / $27.95

reviewed by MATTHEW SCULLY

What to make of someone who describes Mother Teresa as the "Ghoul of Calcutta"? This woman "calling herself 'Mother' Teresa," writes Christopher Hitchens in one of his *Nation* columns collected here, is "a dangerous, sinister person who properly belongs in the caboose of the Pat Buchanan train." Having once in his journalistic rovings "scheduled a stop-by at the Missionaries of Charity in Bose Road," Hitchens gives this account:

> Instantly put off by the mission's motto ("He that loveth correction loveth knowledge"), I none the less went for a walkabout with M.T. herself and had a chance to observe her butch style at first hand. There was something in the way she accepted the kisses bestowed on her feet, taking them as no more than her due, that wasn't quite adorable.

What's more, this same "hell bat" took donations from Charles Keating, "prostituting herself" for "the worst in capitalism":

> How has the extraordinary deception of M.T. come to be perpetrated so widely? As far as one can determine, the M.T. myth began after a British poseur named Malcolm Muggeridge found himself on the steps of St. Paul's. . . . Ready to spend time—but not *too* much time—among the lepers and beggars, Muggeridge got himself to Calcutta and struck pay dirt with a flying visit to Bose Road. And a star was born.

One's first reaction is to ask simply if Hitchens's "stop-by" qualifies him to fault others for not spending "*too* much time" among the afflicted of Calcutta. One's second reaction is to point out that the woman had labored in obscurity and self-imposed poverty about thirty years before Muggeridge arrived with his BBC cameras. This would have been about ten years before Chris Hitchens began his own earthly mission as comfortable social critic and champion of the poor and oppressed.

A little more investigation into the M.T. deception, moreover, would have revealed that Muggeridge quietly donated all that lucre from his Christian writings to charity, chiefly to this same mission where Hitchens spent all of half an hour on his inspection tour. And one wonders how the motto "He that loveth correction loveth knowledge" should so offend a professional critic who certainly loveth *giving* correction.

Matthew Scully is a former associate literary editor of National Review *and speechwriter for Vice President Quayle.*

But none of these reactions quite does justice to Hitchens, who is much more than the brazen little snob he seems in this passage. From a certain angle the column actually reflects one of his more admirable qualities—a scorn of cliché and equivocation. After all, a lot of us breathlessly invoke Mother Teresa the metaphor without ever really modeling our lives on hers. Here at least is someone who discards the pretense.

You can't help but admire that intensity. Hitchens is a sharp one, all right. Much like Muggeridge, in fact, he has a fluency beyond the reach of most of us, and on television is a ferociously articulate debater. Nor is it just glibness. Along with a first-rate mind he has a disorienting stock of historical knowledge—accounting, when overused, for that slightly overstuffed quality to these otherwise model essays.

The problem is figuring out exactly to what end all that intensity and anger are directed. Three hundred and fifty pages of fury and scorn make for lively reading, but the sum effect is to leave even an admirer wondering about the critic himself. His attachments can usually be discerned only through the prism of his hatreds.

Maybe this is because Hitchens is forever absorbed in secondary matters, grubby little leftist quarrels which make up the closest thing the book has to a moral theme. So in just about every other column, no matter what the topic, Nixon, Kissinger, Reagan, North, William Casey, Lee Atwater, et al., are dragged in for a dismissive roughing up. So often, indeed, as to exhaust Hitchens's resources of irony and wit and reduce him to uncharacteristically dull insults, like calling Reagan an "unashamed vulgar fraud," or Nixon a "wretched, warped, dishonest individual"—"vulgar," "vile," and "low-minded" being his stock taunts. "Allowing for the low mentality and the degeneration of the white gene pool under the influence of a decade of Reagan/Bush . . ." is typical of his strained put-downs.

True, the bitterness is relieved now and then by moments of self-deprecation, as when he writes of P.J. O'Rourke that "his efforts to be funny about Nicaragua were more successful than my efforts to be serious." But his introspection never extends to matters of substance. It would have been a nice

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gesture of humility, for instance, to include here one or two of his devastating revelations on the "October Surprise" conspiracy—just to remind us that not only those vulgar fools on the right are capable of being duped. "It's not that we won't find out," he wrote of that sinister conspiracy last December. "It's that we won't find out in time," meaning before Bush left office. Lucky for Hitchens that *he* found out in time—in time to discreetly withdraw these prescient exposés from his collected works.

Likewise, there is something surreal in the air of vindication with which Hitchens writes of the "Cold War nostrums" now so clearly discredited. "The Soviet Union," he writes matter-of-factly in a July 1990 piece for *Harper's*, "did not intend to move its massed armour across the north German plain into Western Europe." Here his luck runs out, though. For it was only in March of this year that the German government released detailed plans by the East German and Soviet armies for the seizure of Western Europe—right down to ready-made maps with new street names for occupied cities, printed currency, even medals to pin on heroes of the conquest.

A world in which "vulgar fools" and "mediocrities" like Reagan are right, and properly educated sophisticates like himself wrong, is, one suspects, too unbearably mundane to contemplate. Maybe he loathes Reagan so much for the same reason he finds Mother Teresa so distasteful: they both have in different degrees the one gift he clearly lacks—the gift of simplicity.

Strange, given the range of his own resentments, to hear Hitchens fault conservatives for their "rancid pessimism about human nature." It's never clear which particular human beings he himself likes or trusts. Indeed, reading his reflections on all the mediocrities, simpletons, fools, vulgar capitalist "fat cats," liars, bores, and pious frauds who surround him, one is reminded of Newman's observation that the sinner wouldn't enjoy heaven if he went there. Hitchens takes himself to be writing in the tradition of Orwell, opposing all "smelly little orthodoxies." As a stylist he may measure up to Orwell; as an observer of men he lacks the charity and—a virtue he touts without ever quite displaying—the empathy.

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smelly little orthodoxy more than in Hitchens's treatment of ex-leftists, which sound like one of those Peoples' Meetings of old where doctrinal infractions were exposed, denounced, and swiftly dealt with. Ronald Radosh, for reporting an alarming conversation he overheard between Sandinista officers (about progress in America on the propaganda front), is a "fink" and "patriotic eavesdropper." For abandoning their post at *Ramparts*, ex-radicals David Horowitz and Peter Collier are "breast-beating recusants." For examining the faults of socialist intellectuals, ex-leftist Paul Johnson is a "would-be informer and stool pigeon"; like Muggeridge, he became a *poseur* the moment he renounced socialism.

Even Bill Clinton earns a rebuke for having second thoughts about his letter of 1969 expressing a "loathing" toward the military. Hitchens, it turns out, was an anti-war activist attending Oxford at the same time. For him the letter "breathes with much of the same spirit of those most defensible of days," though alas it was "obviously wasted on the colonel to whom it was addressed." Yes, what could an ignorant bumpkin of a colonel know of such refined sentiments?

The one time Hitchens really acted in the tradition of Orwell was in an April 1989 "Minority Report" about abortion. There were the obligatory references to the "hypocrites" and "religious cretins" on the pro-life side. But then this:

> I have always been convinced that the term "unborn child" is a genuine description of material reality. Obviously, the fetus is alive, so that the disputation about whether or not it counts as "a life" is casuistry. . . . The same applies, from a materialist point of view, to the question of whether or not this "life" is "human." What other kind could it be? . . . Anyone who has ever seen a sonogram or has ever spent even an hour with a textbook on embryology knows that emotions are not a deciding factor. In order to terminate a pregnancy, you have to still a heartbeat, switch off a developing brain and, whatever the method, break some bones and rupture some organs.

The column attests to a deep, if often hidden, intellectual integrity. And its absence from the book attests more eloquently than anything included to the intimidating power of smelly little orthodoxy. ❐

SHYLOCK: A LEGEND AND ITS LEGACY

John Gross

Simon & Schuster / 386 pages / $25

reviewed by DONALD LYONS

Like Oedipus, Shylock is a character who has leaped out of the play that gave him birth to symbolize a disorder in the human heart. So it amounts to much more than an academic survey when John Gross, in *Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy*, maps the theatrical, cultural, historical, and moral vibrations of Shylock over the more than 400 years since his appearance in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. Gross, now theater critic of the London *Sunday Telegraph*, is the author of the superb *Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, which traced a phase of cultural history with perfect respect for the values of the mind and of the marketplace.[1]

Merchant's plot derives from an obscure and brief Italian tale featuring, in skimpy detail, an unnamed Jewish moneylender who wants to exact a pound of flesh from a Christian creditor in Venice and is foiled in court by a clever lady in disguise. The most famous Jewish character on the English stage prior to *Merchant* had been Barabas in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*; Barabas was a Machiavellian monster who goes about cackling and poisoning wells (Barabas is rather a precursor of Shakespeare's Richard III than of Shylock). But behind all such tales was the medieval stereotype of the red-haired, "demonic, deicidal Jew" out for Christian blood.

Gross punctures such caricatures by introducing us to contemporaneous "real Jews, living in the real world"—that is, the Venice of the late sixteenth century (there was virtually no Jewish life in Shakespeare's England). We meet Leone da Modena, a learned Rabbi, poet, and director of a musical academy (Shylock is presented as anti-music). Modena's colorful and very unidealizing autobiography surfaced only in the nineteenth century. "You can't help wishing that Shakespeare had been able to read it," dryly comments Gross.

Shylock was a usurer. The author briskly punctures all the theological and economic cant about usury, which is merely a quaint and hypocritical name for the movement of money—the economic engine of early capitalism. Certainly there was more Christian "usury" than there was Jewish; in *Merchant*, for instance, the high-minded high-seas merchant Antonio is far more a venture capitalist than Shylock, who is more candid, but also more conservative, about what he is doing. And Gross reminds us, even more drolly, that William Shakespeare was the son of a notorious moneylender and was likely one himself. As Stephen Dedalus cynically puts it in *Ulysses*, "He [Shakespeare] drew Shylock out of his own long pocket. The son of a maltjobber and moneylender he was himself a cornjobber and moneylender."

But, of course, Shylock becomes in the course of the play much more than the Jewish usurer of tradition. He stands forth as a highly individualized and suffering and sympathetic (to a point) human being. "I am a Jew," he says. "Hath not a Jew eyes?" The profound humanity of these words has altered—or at least complicated—the stereotype forever. These and similar moments in the play represent, in Gross's opinion, a greater achievement in the sixteenth century than a courageous gesture like George Eliot's Zionist novel *Daniel Deronda* was in 1876. Shylock is

[1]Recently re-released in paperback by Ivan R. Dee, 361 pp., $14.95.

Donald Lyons is theater critic for the New Criterion.

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also touchingly humanized in his love for his dead wife Leah and for his perfidious daughter Jessica. Humanized, but not sanctified by a long shot, for the man is still eaten by resentment, rancor, and anger, and makes himself the life-denying enemy of romance and gentleness and mercy. Portia has to urge upon him "the quality of mercy." The troubling thing, writes Gross, is that the play treats these sins not as the defects of an individual but as properties of Shylock's Jewishness. He reminds readers that "endless exhortations to deal mercifully can be found in the writings of the Rabbis" and that—supreme irony—the very source for Portia's remarks on mercy is the Jewish sage known as Ecclesiasticus.

So *The Merchant of Venice* presents a tantalizing, anguishing case of a character half—but only half—emerging from the carapace of dehumanizing stereotype, like one of those late sculptures of Michelangelo still partially embedded in the rock. The writer then, for the remaining two-thirds of the book, tracks Shylock on and off the boards down to our own day. It is a fascinating piece of research that, by following one thread, succeeds in illuminating the whole tapestry of theater history. In a way, Gross's book is like the many illustrated histories of productions of *Hamlet* or *The Tempest* that are regularly published, but there is a special historical—a metatheatrical—import in how Shylock has been acted on the stage of the world.

The first Shylock about whose performance we really know anything was Edmund Kean, the flamboyant Romantic actor who debuted in the role on January 26, 1814. (Coleridge later wrote that watching this actor was "like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning.") One of the two reviewers who happened to be in the audience that night was Hazlitt, who wrote memorably of Kean's vitality and energy. Kean, it is clear, still saw Shylock as a villain, though one with gleams of dignity. Hazlitt himself, however, was a bold nineteenth-century liberal and was to become the first great literary re-interpreter and defender of Shylock as a noble victim of small-minded prejudice. From Hazlitt on, views of Shylock might be said to be milestones in the moral growth—or reversion—of civilization.

Shylock was a popular role in the nineteenth century, essayed by William Macready, Junius Booth, and his son Edwin Booth, among others. But the next significant dramatic incarnation of the character was that of Henry Irving, who first played him on November 1, 1879. Irving played a melancholy, persecuted, noble Shylock, a man of immense pathos and (eventually ruined) grandeur. Irving himself called Shylock "the type of a persecuted race, almost the only gentleman in the play, and the most ill-used." The brilliantly melodramatic actor invented, to clinch audience sympathies, a scene where Shylock, solitary and tired, returns at night over a bridge to his home, where he expects to be welcomed by the daughter who has, we know, absconded with his jewels and money to marry a gentile. And Irving's Portia, the magnificent Ellen Terry, was an exciting match for his Shylock. The whole production was a sensation, despite snide reservations from some critics like Henry James.

At least on London stages, Shylocks in the Irving mold prevailed through the 1920s. The most famous Shylock of that decade was George Arliss, whose interpretation, though perhaps drier and more restrained, was still Irvingesque. Things changed in the 1930s, when the most notable Shylock ostentatiously reverted to the old villainous stereotype: John Gielgud's 1937 Shylock was meant to be "a squalid little guttersnipe . . . a cringing Fagin-figure" deliberately breaking away from the "Irvingesque" tradition. (These are Gielgud's own words, from his recent *Acting Shakespeare*—not cited by Gross.)

Shylock echoes on- and offstage through almost all the European cultures. Gross cites malign allusions to the Venetian in Trollope's *The Prime Minister* and in T. S. Eliot's "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar." The German poet Heinrich Heine, ambivalent about his own Jewishness, wrote a memorable fantasy in which he goes searching for, finds, and accepts Shylock in a Venetian synagogue on Yom Kippur. The half-Jewish Proust endows his character Bloch with "the face of an old Shylock." There was a rich tradition of *Merchant* performances on German—and indeed on New York and London Yiddish—stages, although it was done much more rarely in France. There were seven silent movie versions, but none in the sound era, although *Merchant* does figure in Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be*, a 1942 film about a troupe of Polish actors shortly before and during the Nazi occupation.

A frequent use of Shylock in the last century and a half has been by the anti-Semitic left as a symbol of capitalist greed. Marx was a pioneer in this unsavory practice, as in so many others, frequently using "Shylock" as a term of abuse—speaking, for instance, in *Das Kapital* of British landowners as "aristocratic Shylocks." Looking at Marx's overall treatment of Judaism, John Gross sees to the heart of his "arrogance," "brutal contempt," and "determination to put human beings through a metaphysical mincing machine."

And then there came the genuinely demonic use to which the Nazis put the figure of Shylock. *Merchant* itself was frequently and grotesquely staged in the Third Reich, most notoriously in the 1943 production starring Werner Krauss. The Nazis did not need but were not reluctant to deploy the Shylock mythology.

After the war and the Holocaust, *Merchant* has continued to hold world stages. In England, the text has been a football for egoist direc-

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tors: the 1970 Jonathan Miller production was updated to Edwardian times, with Laurence Olivier playing Shylock as a sort of imperfectly assimilated banker. Gross distinguishes between such perverse and useless distortions and the old Irving mode of humanistic rethinking—a mode he finds alive in a 1980 staging by John Barton that carefully sought to present Shylock as an "outsider *because* he was a Jew." The Shylock was David Suchet, identified by Gross as "Jewish-born" and best known to American audiences as Hercule Poirot on PBS.

Men of letters have not abandoned interest in Shylock. John Gross is justly hard on C. S. Lewis for using, in 1942, a phrase like "a wicked ogre of a Jew" but is perhaps too dismissive of C. L. Barber's reading of Shylock as a Lear in waiting. At least these old humanist critics were intelligible, which much recent criticism is not—save in its general bent to debunk the play's Christians and to virtually ignore Shylock. But Gross resists this modish demonizing of the play's Christians just as he had resisted one-sided Shylocks.

But a one-sided Shylock pops up in Philip Roth's provocatively titled *Operation Shylock* (which appeared too late for Gross to take account of). The novel contains a memorable diatribe against Shylock—put into the mouth of one David Supposnik, an antiquarian bookseller in Tel Aviv and possible member of the Israeli secret police. In it, Supposnik rails against that softening sentimentalization of Shylock, both on- and offstage, which Gross is so partial to.

Gross's final verdict on *The Merchant of Venice* and on the haunting, nagging figure of Shylock is not simple. Although Shakespeare did enlarge the stereotype into a suffering human being, Shylock's negative characteristics predominate and are *never* distinguished by anyone in the play from his Jewishness as such. As Gross puts it with electric precision: "At no point does anyone suggest that there might be a distinction between his [Shylock's] being a Jew and his being an obnoxious individual." Of the play as a whole, he concludes that "it is still a masterpiece, but there is a permanent chill in the air." ❐

HUNTING THE DEVIL

Richard Lourie

HarperCollins / 263 pages / $22

THE KILLER DEPARTMENT: DETECTIVE VIKTOR BURAKOV'S EIGHT-YEAR HUNT FOR THE MOST SAVAGE SERIAL KILLER IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

Robert Cullen

Pantheon / 258 pages / $22

reviewed by M. D. CARNEGIE

The wisdom of your parents no longer obtains: Crime pays. Commit a crime, survive a crime, observe a crime with your handycam—and the riches of the kingdom shall be yours. There are lurid books to be written, serial rights to be ironed out, melodramas to be shot and scored; they all pay very well. When David Letterman was asked what he would call his television show on a new network, he claimed he'd not yet decided, but was hoping to work "Buttafuoco" into the title. Everybody got the joke.

Now, thanks to glasnost, the darkness of the human soul yields more than top dollar. It grabs top ruble, too. The society that once proclaimed crime a product of bourgeois capitalism has discovered itself more correct in that judgment than it ever could have imagined; there are eight million stories in the naked oblast, and everyone has one to sell. These two tell the tale of a man who is perhaps the most savage and perverted serial killer in history, and how he was finally captured after a twelve-year spree of deeds unthinkable. That he is widely known throughout the former Soviet Union bespeaks the progress of freedom. That he appears here in mutually "exclusive" stories (the first of the chief inspector of the case, the second of its head detective) tells us less about our perennial fascination with the grotesque, and more about the *Rashomon*-like discrepancies that creep in when men are offered large sums of money to share—and, thus, along the way, embroider—the details of their exploits.

Andrei Chikatilo was born practically blind. The Ukraine of the 1940s offered no chance for a poor young lad to acquire himself some spectacles, and in the classroom his eyes filled with tears at his inability to read the blackboard. His father discovered that—in Stalin's mind at least—to have survived the Nazi prison camps was a form of treachery, and he was sentenced to ten years of sawing Siberian timber. And Chikatilo's sister remembered that when he was a young boy, his mother cradled him in her arms as she weepily recounted how his brother had been abducted and cannibalized during the horrible famine of the 1930s, brought about by the brutal collectivization of the farms. No birth record of this brother has ever been found, but such savagery was common enough, and it may have been just a cautionary tale with a gruesomely ironic moral—that young children should beware of strangers.

M. D. Carnegie is assistant editor of the Public Interest.

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Puberty brought Chikatilo the straw that doubtless broke his psychic camel's back; he discovered he was impotent. Though capable of achieving orgasm—and, later, on two occasions, of sufficient conjugal performance to impregnate his wife—he must surely have felt burdened with shame and rage. Gawky, slope-shouldered, near-blind and not handsome, stripped of his father and maybe a brother, destined to sexual inaptitude, Andrei Chikatilo was a man whose center could not have held for very long.

Even so, he tried. He strung line and cable for a KGB communications unit during military service, then went on to earn three degrees at university. He joined the party, got himself installed as a "police assistant," which meant a flip-top red ID case that carried a measure of respect. He wrote and published articles, and took a teacher's job at a mining school. He married, fathered two children, and lived the gray existence of model Soviet citizen on Rostov's Fifty Years of the All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League Street.

But the demons of Chikatilo's psyche, the burning sense that he'd been deprived of eyes and genitals, would not let him be. He lost his teaching position after some unwarranted incursions into the boys' dormitory. He finally got work as a procurer for a factory, but within himself felt a drive to acquire the only things that in the end would bring him true sexual satisfaction. On December 22, 1978, Chikatilo lured a young girl to a house that nobody, not even his wife, knew that he owned. After blindfolding, molesting, choking, manually inseminating, stabbing, and sexually mutilating her, he tossed her still alive into a nearby river.

And so began his grisly career as a sadist and pedophile, rapist, sexual cannibal, onanist, and necrophile. At the time of his arrest in November 1990, Chikatilo was wanted in connection with the murders of at least fifty-three, often carving off, in one piece, the nose and upper lip of the victim, or—surprise—gouging out the eyes with Oedipal fury. He claimed to have experienced orgasm after slashing open a woman's abdomen. Sometimes, after the most horrible and unspeakable acts, he would find his rage yet unsated, and would fall upon a nearby tree, hacking away at its trunk with his freshly bloodied knife. Inspectors sometimes found remains of a campfire by the murder sites, which dovetailed with his wife's testimony that he often took a frying pan with him to his job.

Richard Lourie, well known for previous books on the Soviet Union, offers the better-written and less believable account of Chikatilo's capture. His hero is Issa Kostoev, the chief inspector who triumphs over his Ingush heritage (the Ingush were victims under Stalin of what was not yet known as ethnic cleansing) to become a respected lawman known for his refusal to accept the obvious explanation. One gleans readily enough, however, that Kostoev is a friend of the author, and so is herein painted in the pure light of goodness one associates with bad fiction and fudged political memoirs.

Robert Cullen's account is by a long chalk more detailed, and ultimately more convincing. He tells the story of Viktor Burakov, a tough detective so obsessed with the case that he sometimes dreamt that he himself was the villain. Burakov risked his career by consulting a psychiatric expert on transsexualism, who turned out to predict with great accuracy

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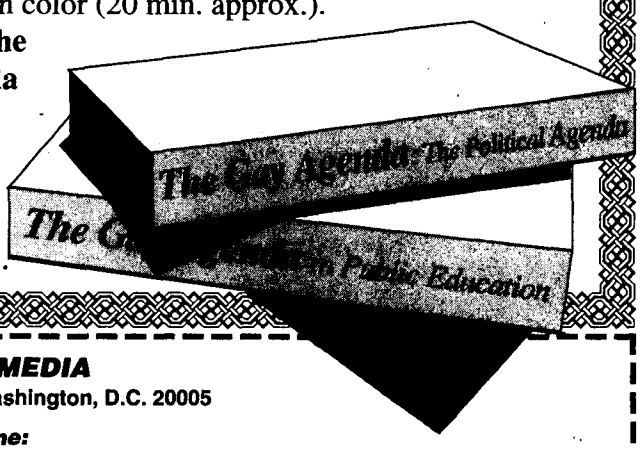

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the killer's age, psychic makeup, and profession—information, Cullen claims, to which Kostoev paid scant heed. Instead, Kostoev instigated a witch-hunt for area homosexuals, several of whom committed suicide as the investigation intensified.

But the investigation, like all else in the old USSR, was a fiasco of mismanagement and ineptitude. Tests misidentified the killer's blood type; evidence was routinely lost or destroyed; a 300-person manhunt surrounding a tiny area still allowed Chikatilo to slip through and murder again when the detail at an out-of-the-way train station deserted its post on a meal break. It was virtually impossible to cross-reference information from department to department because there were no computers; in the 1980s, Rostov's finest were still using color-coded index cards—a red strip for homosexuals, etc.

Cullen does a remarkable job of elucidating the obsolescence of Soviet police techniques, and in so doing reminds us how miraculously efficient are our own men in blue. Everyone makes mistakes—Jeffrey Dahmer was interrupted mid-murder by police who wrongly concluded all was well; and Chikatilo was let go after being apprehended with a briefcase containing a knife, some rope, and petroleum jelly—but the acuity of our police psychiatric research, particularly as regards sex crimes, is inferior to none in the world.

But Lourie's book aspires to and achieves an immediate, often breathless quality. We are shown a remarkable posed photograph of Kostoev peering into a microscope that appears to antedate Enrico Fermi. To a nation raised on "SWAT" and "Hill Street Blues," no text could so effectively delineate the antiquated behemoth that was the Soviet Union. With a wry dolor not unworthy of Updike, he calls the onanists "that loneliest tribe." And this is his steamy rendering of the moments before Chikatilo murders for the first time:

> Just the other day some of the boys had come running up behind him in the park and knocked him to the ground, yelling vicious insults at him, a teacher, a grown man. This had so frightened him that he even had bought a knife and begun carrying it with him at all times.
>
> He had taken it with him on the morning of that day, December 22. The day before had been the anniversary of Joseph Stalin's birth, who would have been ninety-nine. And the night before had been the longest of the year, the earth tipping its farthest from the sun. Perhaps it was that one extra minute of darkness that brought Chikatilo to equinox as well.

Ultimately, of course, these two accounts are incompatible as fact. Cullen sees Kostoev as something of a fool, and Lourie hardly mentions Burakov at all. They worked together on the Chikatilo investigation for over eight years. But their appearance in these rather different stories means the free market has penetrated the silence of the old police state, and no more heartwarming news could come to totalitarianism's opponents. Is the free-market scramble for unauthorized biography and dirt-mongering far behind? I doubt it. Is it anyway better than state socialism? Well, you might ask Kostoev. Or Burakov. ❐

INSIDE GORBACHEV'S KREMLIN: THE MEMOIRS OF YEGOR LIGACHEV

Yegor Ligachev

Pantheon / 369 pages / $27.50

reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

Most Americans recall Yegor Ligachev as the sinister leader of the anti-reform camp during the rule of Mikhail Gorbachev. He was usually depicted as the High Priest of conservatism and party orthodoxy, a backroom manipulator conniving to displace Gorbachev as party chief and erase the changes ushered in under the banner of perestroika.

The danger supposedly posed by Ligachev was compounded by his not being cut from the Brezhnevite mold of venality and sloth. He neither smoked nor drank, he was incorruptible and intolerant of corruption in others, he worked hard and lived modestly. Like Yuri Andropov, who elevated him to the central party leadership, Ligachev wanted to reform the system, not destroy it.

Now retired at age 72, Ligachev has released a memoir clearly intended to correct his image as enemy of democracy and economic progress. In some respects, *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin* is a typical Communist autobiography, full of generalization and evasion and short on intimate detail. Nevertheless, Ligachev is a rare bird: a defeated Communist who enjoys the freedom to openly attack his opponents—in a book published aboveground and not smuggled out like Khrushchev's memoirs.

Ligachev was born to a Siberian peasant family in 1920. His parents were loyal Communists, and, after service in World War II, Ligachev began his career as a party official in Siberia. Stalin's terror saw his father-in-law, a Red Army general, executed as a foreign spy. As a result, Ligachev writes, he and his family were for a time regarded as politically suspect. In the late forties, his political fortunes suffered another setback after his dismissal from a Komsomol position on spurious charges of Trotskyism.

Ligachev survived these difficulties to become an ideal party functionary. He believed strongly in the socialist system, and threw all his energies into bringing Siberia a modern industrial economy through massive, typically Soviet projects: factories, collective farms, scientific research centers. His accomplishments in Tomsk caught the eye of An-

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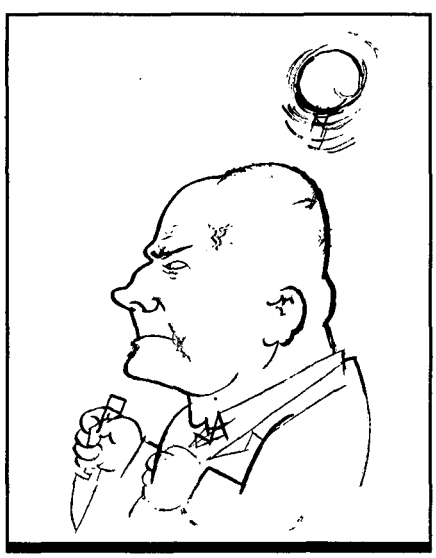
dropov after he became party secretary. Both Ligachev and Gorbachev were the kind of no-nonsense administrators Andropov, panicked at looming economic crisis, was looking to as successors to the Brezhnev crowd.

In retrospect, Ligachev, not Gorbachev, remained most faithful to the Andropov legacy. Like Andropov, Ligachev wanted change, but not at the expense of socialism, the Union, or the Empire. He would tolerate more political liberty, but not if it threatened one-party rule. He was open to abolishing restrictions on writers and journalists, but was deeply unhappy when these freedoms were used to attack the values he held dear.

Whether due to personal integrity or intellectual rigidity, Ligachev remains unabashedly committed to the language and structures of Leninism, and he nurtures a special grudge against those ex-party men who, having built careers within the system, abandoned Communism for Western ways. Ligachev continues to speak about "class interests of the workers," "international Communist and workers' movements," "bourgeois nationalists," and "Socialist Motherland." It infuriates him that he and other party traditionalists who retain a belief in socialism have been dubbed reactionaries and right-wingers while those who wrecked the system have successfully claimed the reform mantle. He applies old Bolshevik labels to these scoundrels, dismissing today's nomenklatura capitalists as right-wingers or rightist extremists while calling himself a socialist—not, mind you, a leftist, since in the Leninist scheme of things leftism is a disease almost as virulent as conservatism.

Although much of *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin* is devoted to settling scores, Ligachev treats Gorbachev gingerly, describing him as naive, manipulable, and aspiring to the role of constitutional monarch. For Ligachev, the real villain is Alexander Yakovlev, Gorbachev's chief adviser who is portrayed here as the man most responsible for the abandonment of socialism and the breakup of the Union. Western readers will come away rather impressed by Yakovlev's formidable talents as a political infighter. Yakovlev clearly benefited from his decade in exile as ambassador to Canada, punishment for writings deemed heretical by the Brezhnevites. Even as he churned out dreary anti-American propaganda tracts, Yakovlev obviously learned something about the way the real world works during his banishment. When he unexpectedly found himself thrust into a position of influence, Yakovlev seized the opportunity to press for reforms much more far-reaching than those envisioned by Andropov, Ligachev, or, for that matter, Gorbachev.

By Ligachev's expert testimony, the more ambitious members of Gorbachev's reform team were no dreamy romantics. Having spent years scheming and disguising their opinions, they proved masters of Kremlin political techniques: obfuscation, the deployment of personnel, and what Samuel Gompers called "masterly inactivity." Their most important step was gaining some control over the media. Ligachev exaggerates when he suggests that radical democrats dominated the press; they controlled only a portion of it—which was enough to bring about a free-wheeling media atmosphere that could not help but discredit the old system.



Ligachev is bewildered, and not a little incensed, that a perspective shared by a minority within the ruling political class of the day actually prevailed over the more orthodox stance he and the majority represented. Indeed, one is struck by the passivity of the traditionalists within the party leadership as things began to fall apart. Men whose careers had risen with the party and presumably would decline as Communism collapsed, who had gloried in the triumphs of Soviet socialism and taken comfort as Communism conquered country after country throughout the world, behaved with a remarkable supineness when every cherished value was brazenly attacked by people they despised.

The failure of the Communist Party to defend itself is usually explained as a consequence of the Soviet (and, for that matter, Russian) emphasis on obedience to the leader. Yet something else may have been at work: the sheer impossibility of reform Communism. Ligachev, it should be remembered, bristled at charges that he was anti-reform. His favored change agenda, however, amounts to not much beyond the changes that Yuri Andropov envisioned: making the system more responsive to market forces, improved management techniques, an emphasis on technological advancement, the tightening of labor discipline.

As for thoroughgoing change, Ligachev reacted as one would expect a Communist to react. He hated capitalism and betrayed an abject ignorance of the workings of modern economies. He is an enthusiastic advocate of central planning, which he compares to "the creativity of an architect who designs a building." Ideally, he says, planning is "not a narrowly technical matter but one closely linked to political decisions made by the leadership on the instructions of congresses of soviets or the ruling party. This is how it is done the world over." Well, not exactly.

Ligachev remains an unreconstructed foe of private ownership: "If we betray our essence, our country will inevitably be thrown back a century, will once again have to traverse the arduous path that the current developed capitalist countries traveled for a long time." He labels proposals to adopt a capitalist system as "letting the moneychangers and Pharisees back into the temple." He dismisses the demands of the non-Russian peoples for independence as the work of hysteria-mongering chauvinists and demagogues. He even judges journalists as "sound" on the basis of how fervently they attack the United States.

I'd say the man has failed to make his case that Russia and the rest of the world would be better off had he and his ideas prevailed. ❐

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CALDWELL
(continued from page 34)

for an answer. Riordan actually *had* spoken in favor of diversity, but only in the twelve-minute organizational video shown in the houses of his supporters—that is, he trumpeted diversity to *white people*. At his campaign headquarters in Sherman Oaks—a disused men's haberdasher's where papier-mâché elephants and posters reading "Next Stop: City Hall" hung on the walls above rows of phone-manning volunteers gabbing busily ("Our numbers are going through the *roof*")—there were certainly quite a few minorities, including Mexican press secretary Annette Castro and her black deputy Alex Tucker. Of course, that message should have been the first thing he put forward at the start of every forum. Riordan was obviously choosing his venues badly.

It was the blacks of South-Central, given the simmering frustrations that could lead to another riot, who most needed what Riordan claimed to be selling—safety and jobs—and who would determine whether what Riordan had was sloganeering or a real *vision*. Woo was going to win the black vote handily, but Riordan had worked in the community as a parks commissioner, and Woo was so dependent on blacks—who gave him 42 percent of his primary votes—that Riordan could destroy Woo's candidacy by taking a quarter of the black vote.

People in the Riordan campaign felt the press had poisoned blacks against him (he pulled only 4 percent of the black vote), but there were indications that hunting for votes in South-Central would not be in vain. There was no doubt Riordan had devoted massive amounts of his time and money to reading and computer programs in inner-city schools, most notably through the LEARN program he had helped launch. His police message was not necessarily a loser: liberal Democrat Mel Levine had beaten Barbara Boxer in South-Central in the 1992 senatorial primary with ads that showed riot footage and proclaimed, "A democratic society can't tolerate mob rule." The business message didn't have to hurt, either: with only half the black population of New York, Los Angeles had twice as many black-owned businesses. Finally, black political empowerment antedated massive federal involvement in the civil rights movement, which had prospects of leaving their politics in Los Angeles more flexible than black politics elsewhere in the country.[3] In the long run, the deepest problem L.A. blacks may have faced was an addiction to political power that had begun in the early 1960s with the capture of the three City Council seats they hold to this day. Politics had enabled blacks to control fully 30 percent—triple their percentage of population—of government jobs in Los Angeles County, nice work if you can get it, but a precarious economic base in an era of governmental retrenchment.

Furthermore, blacks had—through their association with the Bradley regime—implicated themselves in the sort of corporate activism Riordan personified. Big corporations were the only ones making "reach-out" efforts to the black community—in fact, in a new variation on masked politics, "entrepreneurial" had become a euphemism for anti-affirmative action. "Rebuild Los Angeles," the business consortium that Bradley had invited Riordan's close friend Peter Ueberroth to head, seemed to be faltering, but it was a venue for black input—and set-asides, for the RLA companies were the only powerful entities in L.A. that could afford them. The black activists of Danny Bakewell's Brotherhood Crusade were flocking to RLA enterprises, if only for the purpose of dragging Latino workers off worksites. In another ironic twist for the entitlement state, black politicians were almost unanimously championing the military-industrial complex, at least so far as Hughes Aircraft was concerned. Hughes, while pulling thousands of jobs out of Los Angeles, was playing a masterful game of corporate blackmail with the affirmative-action card—holding black jobs hostage in hopes of winning tax concessions from California and direct cash payments from the federal government. The *Nation* called RLA "corporatism dressed up in the language of cooperation," but the right called it PC dressed up in the language of the free market.

Riordan and Woo each would try to blockade the other at the center. "Riordan may try to use the Yorty strategy," said political scientist Raphael Sonenshein, "and deal with the black vote by isolating it." That is, he would visit South-Central and kiss a few black babies, but not enough to bring explicitly racial issues to the fore. Racial polarization was a loser for a conservative in South-Central—but it wasn't necessarily a winner anywhere else, and it was certainly a loser, too, among Jews. This still left Woo needing not only to win a mind-blowing majority—along the lines of 90 percent—of black votes, but also to drive black turnout through the roof, thanks to the extra white votes Riordan's grassroots campaign had mobilized. Which led to an irony: Michael Woo, the candidate of unity, would have to polarize the electorate to win.

This was a political situation that offered Riordan great opportunities, but also great dangers. These were brought home when the *Dallas Morning News* reported that Riordan, when canvassing door-to-door, had been asked by an old white harridan, "Black people are just awful. Don't you think so?" and had replied, "Some of them." While stumbling over a clarification and a denial at the same time—foolishly, because the exchange had been *taped*—he was ultimately saved only by a remark by Woo's press secretary Garry South: "Los Angeles isn't about to elect an old, rich, white Republican." Woo took only 14 percent of the white vote.

Woo had other problems. He had made an enemy of City Council President John Ferraro, a liberal Democrat, two years ago during council redistricting, when Woo was re-elected even in the face of the machinations of other council members to redistrict him out of his seat. The enmity was bitter, and ever since it had become clear that the runoff would be between "Woo and Who," as the joke went, Ferraro had vowed to endorse "Who." Wachs hates Woo, and won't endorse him. Furthermore, insiders hint-

[3] For a rigorous and highly readable examination of the growth of black political power in Los Angeles, particularly of the Bradley coalition, see Raphael Sonenshein's recent *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles* (Princeton University Press, 301 pp., $29.95).

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ed that in May, Council Finance chairman Zev Yaroslavsky—a liberal Democrat and longtime Woo ally, who supported Woo against an incumbent in 1981—would shock his largely liberal Jewish constituents by endorsing Riordan, who beat Woo 3-2 among Jews.

The genius of the blacks and Jews who made up the Bradley bloc had been to bite into a Midwestern Protestant majority as it was losing its bearings and its moral certitude. Now that the Bradley bloc had crumbled, no Anglo alternative was there to replace it. One *Los Angeles Times* reporter saw the "merchant classes" and multi-ethnic labor as replacing the old white working class as ballast for any "conservative" campaign, and they were the votes Richard Riordan had to win, if he wanted a victory that wouldn't be seen as a parting shot from white legerdemain.

And he was trying: When he addressed a black congregation at the First African Methodist church one Sunday this spring, he paused fully six seconds before settling on a word to use to describe the May 1992 events. When he finally came up with "rebellion," the entire congregation burst into laughter. In a similar fit of racial sensitivity, Riordan said privately at an April 3 rally that PC reigned because people who came out of the sixties were "afraid to call a . . . a . . . a fact a fact."

A big change came over the inner city after the verdict-weekend mobilization, a change that will have broad ramifications for Los Angeles politics. With 5,000 National Guard troops in the barracks, the city could deploy its entire police force in high-crime areas. And the people of South-Central were—almost unanimously—overjoyed, telling reporters things like, "It's the safest this neighborhood has been in years." It was thought that unrest in the aftermath of the second King trial would help the law-and-order candidate Riordan, while peace would help Woo. It didn't work out that way: South-Central was calm, but no one was thinking about the mayor's race at all. If anything, voters of all races were disillusioned to find that it was not mayoral politics that had finally brought peace to the inner city but a moment of political panic. ❐

CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 10)

plots. (No, I doubt I'll ever be an old woman with a black chauffeur.)

Bizarrer yet is Bowman's blather about *Lorenzo's Oil*. A yuppie denial of death? Ghastly tastelessness? His is truly a Martian analysis of this extraordinary movie about two laymen (in things medical) who buck foundations, medicine, and science to find a remedy to a cruel disease doctors could only shrug their shoulders at. Perhaps Salk's and Pasteur's works offend Bowman, leading as they have to longer, more comfortable lives for countless people. Imagine the real-life protagonists of *Lorenzo's Oil* actually having the gall to try to help their child slip his ailment's horrible effects and eventual fatal triumph. If that's philistinism, then so is all of medicine and any other effort to improve the hand nature dealt us. —*Ross Nelson*
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

James Bowman replies:
Ross Nelson suffers from what we critics call "literal-mindedness." Though he will certainly never be an old lady with a black chauffeur, he might have to change in old age the way that he has treated other people all his life; he might have to recognize the limitations of the way he was brought up; he might find himself befriended by someone who started out despising him. Likewise, he takes my criticism of the philistinism of the moving picture called *Lorenzo's Oil*; made by George Miller, Nick Nolte, Susan Sarandon, and various other non-Pasteurs, to mean that I oppose real-life medical science!

"Philistinism" is a term used only in relation to art. I'm all for Salk and Pasteur in the world of actual diseases, but if they appear in a work of art they are obliged to be believable in a way they are not in real life. The situation in *Lorenzo's Oil*, though based on fact, is not believable in this way. The film takes a recognizable human situation—the imminent death of a loved one—and transforms it into an unrecognizable one by introducing a *deux ex machina* in the form of a cure (or at least a palliative) for the disease. This creates an emotional distance between it and the large majority of people who, finding themselves in that situation, do not have that option available to them—to say nothing of those who, given the fact that Lorenzo will remain a virtual vegetable for the rest of his pathetically prolonged life, would not even want it.

Driving Miss Daisy—and *Star Wars* too—are chock-full of recognizable human situations in spite of the old-fashionedness or outlandishness of their stories. *Alive* and *Lorenzo's Oil* are relatively poor in such situations, or they do trite or improbable things with them that make the audience's sense of connection with them difficult to establish. That such a connection is essential, or even possible, is what the multiculturalist mafia would deny, which is why conservatives should stand up for human—as opposed to black, feminist, gay, or disabled—audiences. My pet peeve about the movie business these days is that, in its fascination with fantasy, it seems sometimes almost to have forgotten how to touch the nerve of a real, human, adult, non-minority audience—or why it should be trying to. ❐

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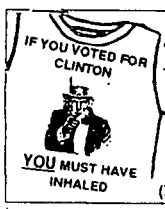

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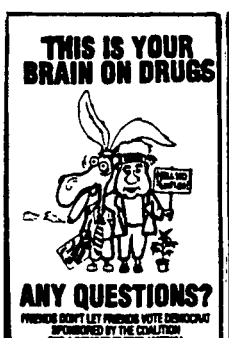

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Body Mind & Spirit

After psychic copulation with Miss Jean Loomis, a contemporary of ours here on the planet Earth, "Seth," a ghost from God knows where or when, finally gets his marvelous message across to Miss Loomis's millions of grateful readers who read her communiqués in the esoteric pages of a promising new publication certain to be read in the Oval Office:

So, dear friends, you now have a very dear friend as President of your great nation. This Bill Clinton is, indeed, very inspired and very inspiring. And his election indicates a major shift of your group mind—a major shift toward becoming your own authority figures and away from looking to paternalistic authority figures to take care of you.

Indeed, from day one there was no doubt of his election because this Clinton embodies the qualities which insure conscious creation of your own reality. First, his heart is open; he's willing to tell the truth of what he's feeling. Second, he's grateful for what he has and for the people in his life. Third, he's committed to what he wants and what he believes in. Fourth, he's certain of his connection to Divine Inspiration. And finally, he's a lot of fun. . . .

Clinton's shortcomings? He may tend, at times, to move forward almost too quickly and decisively (seeming to ignore normal body needs), and by doing so, to tax those about him or seem to leave them in the dust. Fortunately, this Clinton has surrounded himself with many very grounded souls, in touch with and unafraid to express their feelings. This core of grounded support provides a strong grip on the string of his balloon when his vision tends to get beyond the dictates of the present and of his helpers' mortal bodies. . . .

Look forward to a President who sees your divinity and infinite creativity and stimulates you to use it. Look forward to fun and health. And look forward to an organically-grown economy . . .

[January/February 1993]

Bulletin Quotidien

(Agence Congolaise d'Information)

Evidence that though the Congo is well within the Third World it has risen up to an honored place on the cutting edge of feminist medical research:

OWANDO 18 MARS (ACI)—Une femme de 33 ans, pour se masturber, a introduit une bouteille de 50 ml dans l'orifice vaginal, qui a créé un effet de ventouse au niveau du col utérin, a-t-on constaté sur place.

Mme KIBA Pauline, mère de deux enfants et épouse de M. OYOUA Antoine vivant au village Okoungou dans le district d'Owando, avait l'habitude de se masturber avec une bouteille bouchée. Elle a oublié mardi de fermer cette bouteille qui lui a créée un effet de ventouse dans le sexe.

Après l'opération d'extraction de l'engin qui a duré environ une heure à Okoungou, Mme. KIBA a été admise à l'hôpital général d'Owando où elle ne se sent plus en danger, a-t-on appris de source médicale. (ACI)

[March 18, 1993]

Duke Magazine

Writing in the official magazine of one of the great cow colleges in the Republic, a Miss Bridget Booher boldly investigates the sartorial enigmas and makes an astounding discovery thanks to Prof. Radway, another local zany:

When Chanel shows models dripping with gold chains on necks and waists, the look, on the surface, is about wealth and privilege. And yet, years earlier, urban blacks began wearing multiple gold chains as a sign of status and as a way of alluding to the image of their ancestors in the chains of slavery.

Janice Radway, a professor in Duke's literature program, says the intricacies of such cross-referencing are endlessly debatable. "Is it that Chanel is longing for the vibrancy and vitality of black culture? Or are they making fun of it, demonstrating its [supposed] vulgarity, so that their usage of it is an expression of racism? I think it's probably both those things. The question of appropriation is very complicated."

[March-April 1993]

Cleveland Free Times

A transilient moment in the early life of an American patriot, as reported by his high school pal, the esteemed Tom Radis:

Stephanopoulos took a risk by joining the Clinton campaign before the public knew who Clinton was. No surprise there; Stephanopoulos always enjoyed gambling. After school, he and a few friends would sometimes head over to Thistledown and bet the ponies. "If we had 10 bucks in our pockets, we were lucky," Kretch says.

Stephanopoulos was always sure of himself, always knew he was right. If there was a difference of opinion, he wouldn't just hammer away. He'd make his argument, then walk away. "He was a little arrogant," Radis said. "Then again, he usually *was* right."

One incident is particularly telling. The gang ordered out for pizza one night and Radis was going to make sure Stephanopoulos was going to be wrong. George called in the order, but unbeknownst to him, Radis called the pizza place back and changed the order. Radis even bet Stephanopoulos about what was on the pizza.

"We went to pick it up and, sure enough, it was sausage and mushroom, not pepperoni and mushroom," Radis says. "George kept saying, 'It's the wrong pizza. That's not what I ordered.' All the way home, he's going on and on. He got so worked up about it, he started hyperventilating and he passed out in the car. He was so shattered by being wrong, he couldn't handle it."

Radis didn't tell him for years about the prank. It was more fun to rub it in, to say, "Well, there was that time with the pizza . . ."

[March 24, 1993]

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New York Times

Three New Age chums in search of a Bible, a Schmible, or whatever the hell ya call it:

Friday night in Portland, Ore., before he began a working dinner with national security aides to prepare for the summit, President Clinton decided he wanted to swear in his new Ambassador-at-Large for Russia and other former Soviet republics.

Strobe Talbott, the possessor of that impressive and vague-sounding title, was confirmed Friday by the Senate.

So Mr. Clinton's aides began scrambling around for a Bible in their suite at the Benson Hotel in Portland, where the President was attending a forest summit, so that Mr. Clinton could conduct an impromptu swearing-in.

They couldn't find one. "You'd think you'd be able to find a Bible in a hotel room," marveled George Stephanopoulos, Mr. Clinton's communications director.

They briefly thought about swearing in Mr. Talbott on a summit briefing book, which is roughly the same size, but then the hotel finally yielded up a Bible and the President did the honors.

Labor Secretary Bob Reich, who was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford with the President and Mr. Talbott, held the Bible.

The three friends got misty, and the President gave Mr. Talbott a bear hug. But before things reached Iron John overload, the trio cracked up laughing. "It was a really beautiful moment," Mr. Stephanopoulos said.

[April 4, 1993]

USA Today

Another lucid moment with the rap artist Mr. Ice-T, the famous hyphenated American known for such classics as "Cop-Killer":

He is less reticent about the building racial tension in L.A., where attention is fixed on the trial of four policemen accused of violating black motorist Rodney King's civil rights.

"If they find them guys not guilty, I say get a bomb shelter," Ice-T snarls. "This time it's gonna be national. Everybody in America's looking at it, and no matter how bad (the jurors) wanna let them cops go—sometimes they gotta sacrifice the lamb."

Last year's riots were more a public demand for fair play than a venting of mindless outrage, he says.

"Now, regardless of how stupid or ignorant or wrong or unfocused that particular uprising was, it was necessary. If they hadn't rioted, there wouldn't be a second trial."

Ice-T isn't a full-time rebel. He likes to lose himself in comic books and video games. He doesn't drink or smoke, and he's never taken drugs. He's a protective parent who plans to send his son to a private school and hopes his 15-year-old daughter will abandon her entertainment dreams and become an attorney.

[March 26, 1993]

Boston Herald

Old Boston's greatest daily reports on the rituals and shouts of ten famous gigantomastic gals from the movement for female masculinity:

Since 1976, a special group of women have congregated in New York for a unique celebration of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt nearly 4,000 years ago.

Gloria Steinem, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Bea Kreloff, Edith Isaac Rose, Bella Abzug, Michelle Landsberg, Phyllis Chesler, E.M. Broner, Grace Paley and Lilly Rivlin make up the Seder Sisters.

The Women's Seder (usually held on the third night of Passover) "is the hottest ticket in town," said Broner during a phone interview. . . . After years of attending traditional seders where the men performed the rituals at the meal while the women cooked and cleaned and prepared, Broner said, it was time for a change.

[Broner's new book] *The Telling* describes the basic changes the group has made, including reading from a Women's haggadah and referring to God as "She." Beyond the traditional matzoh-ball soup and gefilte fish, the menu also caters to the vegetarians and macrobiotics in the group. Instead of leaving a cup of wine on the table for the prophet Elijah, the women welcome Miriam, Moses' sister, to join their festive meal.

More creative interpretations can be found in the discussion of the plagues. . . . Not only do the Seder Sisters reinterpret the original 10 plagues, but each year they call out plagues that have afflicted their personal lives. In 1992, Broner writes, "there were so many plagues, columns of them, a whole portico, enough to describe a dysfunctional society. They called out: Silicone Implants; Homophobia; Crown Heights Racial Strife; The Rape Trials of the Accused—Willie Kennedy Smith, Mike Tyson, the Mets . . ."

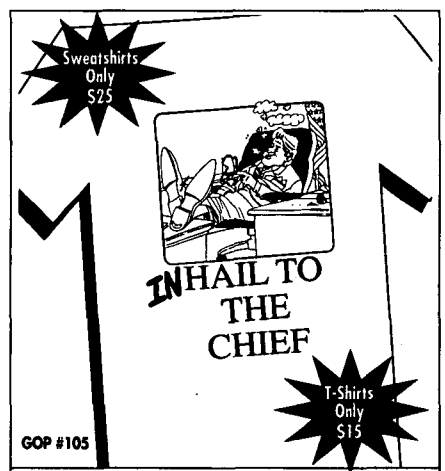
[March 31, 1993]

The Great Books Series

The steatopygic Admiral William J. Crowe, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Ronald Reagan, reflects back on those wondrous years and exhales a stupendous puff of Kultursmog, replete with seventy percent of the smog's leading pollutants—small wonder he found candidate Clinton a moral colossus:

I was dismayed by our lack of a sensible industrial policy, by our educational failings and by the terrible divisiveness isolating so many citizens from the great American community that makes us a people rather than an assortment of factions. I found myself increasingly disturbed by the Republican Party's tendency to exclude certain groups from the mainstream of American life and exploit antagonisms within the society. It seemed to me that our economic and industrial deterioration had replaced superpower confrontation as the greatest threat to our national security.

[from The Line of Fire: From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military, *by William J. Crowe, Jr. Simon & Schuster, 367 pages, $25]*



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The Silent Bang

by Franz M. Oppenheimer

Late on the Tuesday afternoon when the returns of the first round of France's legislative elections were known, I came downstairs to the bar of our little hotel in the French Alps for a pre-dinner drink. It was late in the skiing season and there were few hotel guests, only the local regulars and the hotel owner, all engaged in a boisterous discussion. Finally, I thought, political passions had surfaced. I was wrong. The discussion was about *boules*, the different rules of the game applied in different cities, and the special qualities of balls of different manufacture. I joined the group, drink in hand, waiting for someone to comment on the collapse of the Socialist Party at the polls. But no one did.

There had been an absence of passion in the campaign: virtually no election posters, few meetings, and no excitement. In the twelfth year of Mitterrand's Socialist presidency, not only the media but also the Socialists themselves said that defeat was inevitable. But the magnitude of the defeat had not been predicted. Pollsters and pundits had counted on a substantial increase in votes for the environmentalists, with whom (and with the Communists) Rocard and some lesser Socialist leaders thought a new "progressive" majority could be put together under the label "Big Bang." In the end, while the Communists managed to increase their pitiful percentage of popular votes from 3.5 to 4.5 percent, and lost only two seats in the National Assembly (keeping just 24 out of 577 seats), the Greens were humiliated, with less than one percent of the popular vote. Jean-Marie Le Pen's right-wing National Front won only 5.6 percent (10 percent had been predicted), and lost its single seat in the National Assembly. Clearly, there was no market for extremism on either side.

Nor was there a market for ideology. The elimination of the left from French political life—Communists and Socialists combined dropped from 52 percent to 36 percent of the popular vote and won 93 out of 577 seats in the newly elected National Assembly—had little to do with ideology. Polls show that a third of Frenchmen believe that there is no difference between right and left. Corporate middle management constitutes the largest segment of Socialist voters, and workers and the unemployed constitute the largest segment of the radical right. The Socialists are now the party of the bourgeoisie.

The center/right parties, which ran a common campaign and in most places presented a common candidate in the second round of elections, did not increase their percentage of popular votes as spectacularly as their seats: popular votes increased from 47 percent to 55 percent; their seats from 275 to 484—that is, to 84 percent of the total. The right won because voters deserted the left. And the main reasons for that desertion, as enumerated by a veteran French observer, were (1) the evaporation of Marxist ideology, (2) unemployment and economic insecurity, (3) crime, and (4) a series of scandals involving Socialists in high places—from the use of HIV-tainted blood in hospitals to fraudulent financing of campaigns and the acceptance of personal financial favors—some of them, such as Prime Minister Bérégovoy's acceptance of a modest interest-free loan from a friend of thirty years' standing for buying an apartment, as insignificant ethically as the overdrawing of accounts in their own banks by our congressmen.

Americans will recognize the issues that drove the election—crime, corruption, education, and immigration. Even a few days in England and Germany made it plain that the rich countries of the Occident have identical problems. There are homeless in the streets of Bremen, where despite the German recession shoppers abound. The French press carries stories of arson in the schools during class hours, and of teachers being raped and refusing to come to class out of fear for their safety. Complaints of the decline of literacy are ubiquitous among the still-educated.

Despite the engagement of French troops in Bosnia and Somalia, foreign policy rarely figured in the list of principal problems. But the diatribes of Jacques Chirac (whose Gaullist RPR party will play a big role in the next government) cast a shadow over the future. Chirac risked dividing his coalition when he attacked GATT and the EC's agricultural policy, and insisted on a strong French voice to speak for Europe against the United States.

Indeed, Chirac's dubious if unspoken premise was that Europe's interests coincide with France's. His rhetoric on trade (which mirrored the Mitterrand government's position) triggered anti-French feelings in Germany. The *International Herald Tribune* reported that a discreet German mission in Paris warned the new French government in April of the serious consequences of sabotaging GATT and the EC agricultural policy. The *Tribune* added that the mission may have issued a veiled threat to withhold support of the French franc. Several German industrialists and bankers told me they couldn't much longer tolerate Kohl's unconditional support for French obstructionism in the EC.

Like the Democrats in the U.S. Congress, the new French government will have two years to reduce unemployment, improve the economy, and rekindle confidence. But France's economy is bound up even more closely than the U.S.'s with world economic conditions. Paradoxically, if the Clinton administration should abort the recovery in the United States, that failure of the left in America might well doom the French right two years from now. ❐

Franz M. Oppenheimer is a Washington lawyer.

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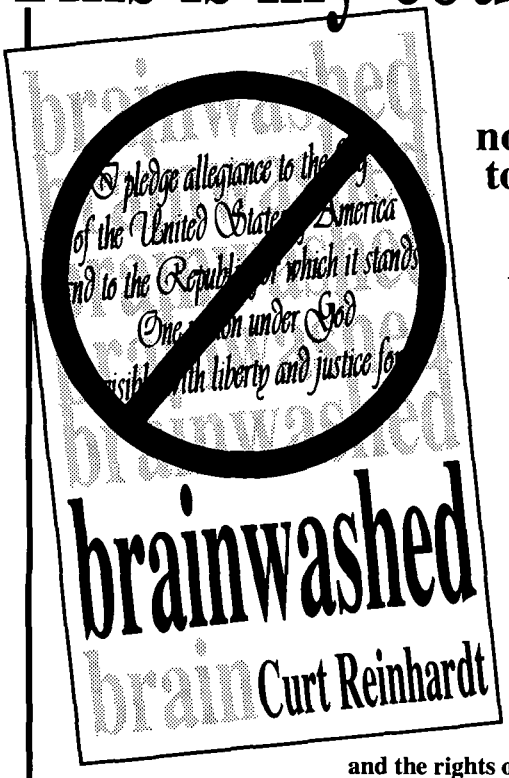

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For that I make no apology... you have forced me to do it.

It's time to fasten your seatbelt!

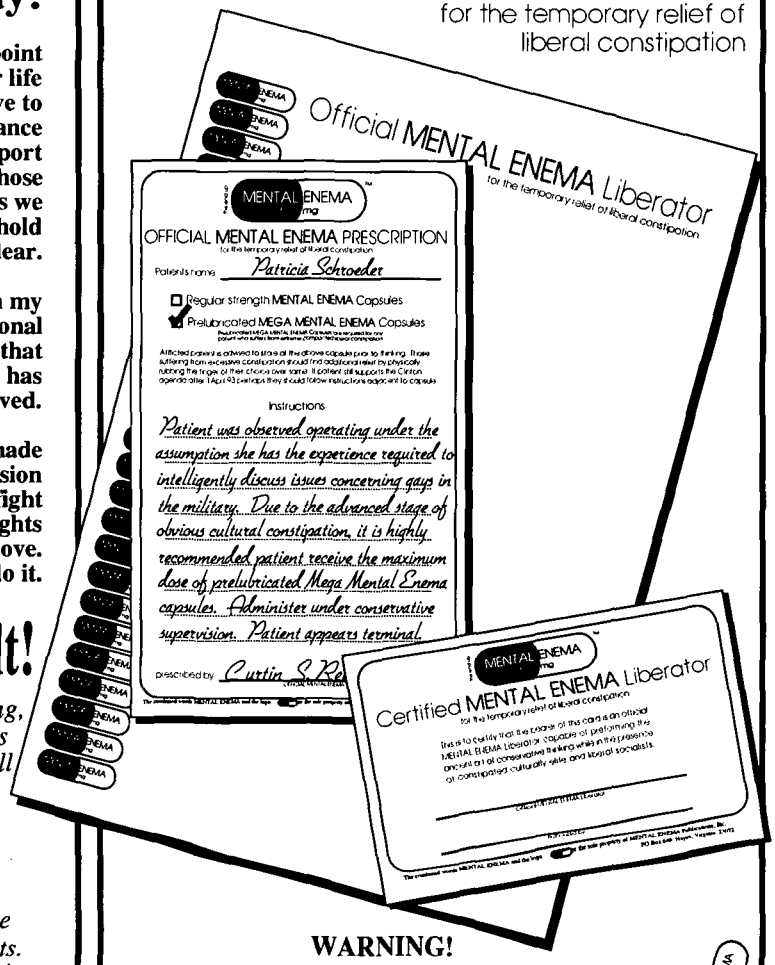
- *Any straight, conservative man working for a living, who loves* ***real*** *women, can speak english, respects our military and pledges allegiance to our flag will love this book! Clinton supporters will hate it!*
- **brainwashed** *takes aim and hits the target like a lazer guided missle! 1993's most powerful book!*
- *I'd be willing to bet that Curt Reinhardt will be the subject of an FBI investigation and possible threats. It took a tremendous conviction to put this in print!*
- *At first his* Mental Enema Capsules *were just funny. When I was half way through reading* **brainwashed** *... When I was half way through reading* **brainwashed** **I suddenly realized... these things really work!**

Please help us!

This book is controversial and no major publisher has been willing to promote it. We print small runs, financed by direct sales & hope you'll support our efforts.

my wife said...
Curtie, that's gross!
I said...
Yea, ain't it wonderful!

for the temporary relief of liberal constipation™


Official MENTAL ENEMA Liberator
for the temporary relief of liberal constipation
MENTAL ENEMA
OFFICIAL MENTAL ENEMA PRESCRIPTION
Patient's name Patricia Schroeder
Regular strength MENTAL ENEMA Capsules
Prelubricated MEGA MENTAL ENEMA Capsules
Instructions
Patient was observed operating under the assumption she has the experience required to intelligently discuss issues concerning gays in the military. Due to the advanced stage of obvious cultural constipation, it is highly recommended patient receive the maximum dose of prelubricated Mega Mental Enema capsules. Administer under conservative supervision. Patient appears terminal.
prescribed by Curtis S. R
MENTAL ENEMA
Certified MENTAL ENEMA Liberator

WARNING!

MENTAL ENEMA Capsules are only effective when prescribed by a **Certified MENTAL ENEMA Liberator** who pledges to be conservative in philosophy & capable of performing the lost art of thinking.

The *official prescription kit* includes your personal ID card, a ream of quality red, white & blue letterhead for use when corresponding with constipated politicians and of course the prescription pads for rendering emergency aide to socially & culturally constipated liberals . Great for office memo's too!

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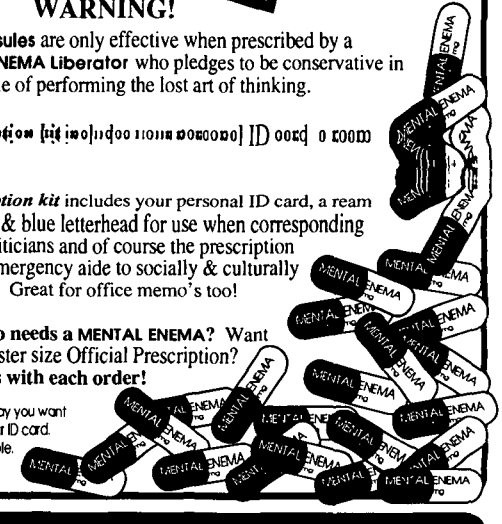
Please include the exact way you want your name to appear on your ID card. Make sure it's legible.



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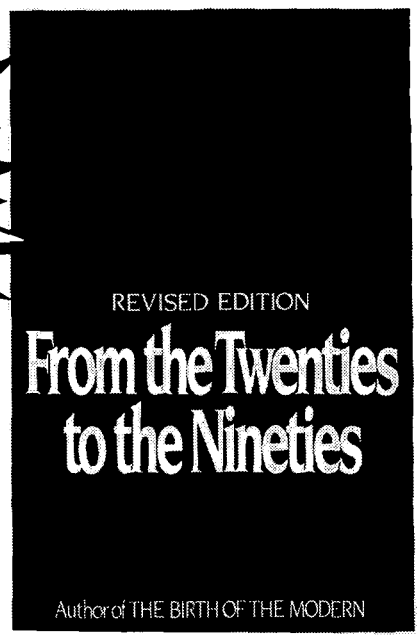

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